

# *The Saints of The Canon Of The Mass*

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All the redeemed constitute together the kingdom of Jesus Christ, among all these citizens, whether they have already happily reached the term, or are still combating on earth, or making atonement in the place of purification, there is a living communication, a reciprocal interchange; good deeds and sufferings, merits and satisfactions — in short, all the fruits of grace are common property from which each draws and to which each contributes. It is precisely at the celebration of Mass that we are reminded of the happiness and dignity of belonging to so glorious a community, that is, that we are “fellow-citizens with the saints and domestics of God” (Eph. 2:19). For after the priest has interceded for the Church militant and Her members, he endeavors to add greater weight and efficacy to his supplications by invoking the saints. His mental vision is enlarged and directed to the Heavenly Jerusalem. In happy consciousness of the relationship and intimate connection he enjoys with the glorified saints, he celebrates their memory, as though to invite them, as “kings and priests” (Apoc. 5:10), to offer the Sacrifice along with us, and by their powerful intercession and abundant merits to support our weak prayers, so that by the strength of their mediation we may experience God’s help and protection in all situations and necessities (*ut in omnibus protectionis tuae muniamur auxilio*). Whilst, therefore, the Church “comes to Jesus, the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the sprinkling of blood,” that is, to the Sacrifice of the Altar, She comes also “to the Church of the first-born, who are written in the heavens, and to the spirits of the just made perfect” (Heb. 12:22-24), that all her children may unite in the divine action and jointly with their Common Head, Jesus Christ, offer and be offered.

By name are mentioned: the blessed Virgin Mary, the twelve Apostles and twelve Martyrs; finally, all the Saints, at least in general.

a) “First of all” (*imprimis*), and, therefore, more than all, we honor the memory of the “glorious ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.” As always, so also in this instance Mary is rightly named in the first place; she is Queen not merely of the Apostles amid Martyrs, but of all the Saints. Her name is not mentioned simply, but with honorable qualifications, that proclaim her grandeur, power and dignity. She is called “the glorious” (*gloriosa*); for as Queen of Heaven and of earth, she is elevated above all the choirs of angels and saints in eternal bliss and glory. She was taken up to Heaven in body and soul and transfigured in glory; there she wears the most beautiful crown of honor and power. As on earth she excelled all creatures by the fullness of grace, the wealth of virtues, so in the next life she surpasses all the

citizens of Heaven by the splendor and magnificence of her glory. Because she was on earth the most humble, the most pure, the most devout, the most loving, the most sorrowful, therefore, she is now in Heaven the most glorious amid the most happy. — Then she is called “always a virgin” (*semper virgo*). This privilege is often commented upon. Even the Church acknowledges Her inability to praise in a worthy manner Mary’s purity of heart, inasmuch as she exclaims: “Holy and immaculate Virgin, with what praises shall I exalt thee, I know not, since thou hast carried in thy womb Him whom the heavens cannot contain!” Mary is the Virgin of all virgins; she is the most venerable, glorious and wonderful Virgin, she is the model, guide, protectress of all virginal souls. By the virginity which she vowed to God, she was prepared to become the “Mother of our God and Lord Jesus Christ;” for assuredly it behooved the Mother of God to be and ever remain a virgin. The Divine Maternity was only the complete consecration and sealing of her incomparable virginity. Through the greatest and sole miracle of its kind, she united “the joys of maternity with the honor of virginity.” The Divine Maternity in its own kind is of infinite dignity; for Mary gave birth to the Son of the Most High. This maternal dignity of hers is the intrinsic reason why Mary above all other creatures was endowed with the plenitude of grace and holiness, of glory and power. As the Mother of God, she is the Queen of Heaven and earth; she reigns as mistress, with maternal power and love, in favor of our salvation. Hence so frequently we cry to her: *Monstra te esse matrem* — “Show thyself a mother,” that is, show that thou art not merely our Mother who loves us so tenderly, but that thou art also and still more the Mother of God, ever all-powerful by thy intercession. Let us here yet briefly notice her connection with the bloody and unbloody Sacrifice of Christ. The Victim of the Cross and of the Altar was given to us through the Virgin Mother Mary; He is “the fruit of her most noble body” by the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost. The God-Man is “born unto us and given to us from Mary, the unsullied Virgin” (*nobis natus, nobis datus ex intacta Virgine*). She “stood by the Cross of Jesus,” and while her maternal tears were mingled with His blood and the sword of sorrow pierced her soul, she offered her Crucified Son for the redemption and salvation of the world. Great as the sea was then her sorrow; she was nailed to the Cross with her Son and she felt all the pain of His wounds in her heart. Hence she is justly styled “the Queen of Martyrs.” Her name, therefore, is inseparable from the Sacrifice of Christ; the remembrance of Mary must always be united with that of Christ at His sacrificial celebration. Christ’s holy Flesh and Blood offered in sacrifice on the altar come to us from the heart and bands of Mary; from Mary, moreover, we should learn, with priestly disposition and self-devotedness, to offer the Lamb of God and ourselves at the foot of the altar.

b) After the Virgin Mother of God, the twelve Apostles are named in the Canon; the succession differing somewhat from the records of the Apostles in Holy Scripture. The Apostles are those chosen messengers, to whom the Lord imparted full powers as teachers, priests and pastors, that, as His representatives, they might continue the work of the redemption. As the salt of the earth and light of the world, they were to establish in all places the kingdom of God, to extend and strengthen the Church. To

prepare them for this, He vouchsafed to them more than to others His presence and intercourse, made them the immediate witnesses of His life, miracles and doctrine, of His passion and resurrection. For this He promised them His assistance and sent them the Holy Ghost from on high. In obedience to the commission of their Divine Master the Apostles went out into the whole world, to teach and baptize all nations, to bring to them the blessings of religion and together with it true earthly happiness. "Their sound has gone forth into all the earth, and, their words unto the ends of the world" (Ps. 18:5). Self-sacrifice was their office and calling, their life, and their death. "For Christ's sake we are put to death all the day long. We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Rom. 18:36); but they rejoiced to endure shame and sorrow for the name of Jesus, and, after they "had fought the good fight and finished the course," they gave up their life by the bloody death of martyrdom, and thus planted the Church in their blood. The accounts of the fate and end of most of the Apostles are but few and obscure. In what follows we shall relate briefly a few characteristic traits from the life and death of the saints mentioned in the Canon, in order to afford some nourishment to devotion when repeating the names in question.

***Sts. Peter and Paul*** inseparably combined in the liturgy —are named first. The birthplace of the Apostle Peter, who was previously called Simon, was Bethsaida on the western shore of the Sea of Genesareth. From his fishing-net, miraculously filled with fish, he was called to the spiritual fishing of the souls of men, and was soon afterward placed at the head of the Apostolic band. Jesus Christ made him the foundation of His Church, and invested him with the office and dignity of primate over the universal Church. As the visible representative of Christ and as chief pastor, he was with supreme power to feed and guide the lambs and sheep, the entire flock of Christ. Hence in the Gospel, Peter takes preeminence over the other Apostles, and there appears already by his whole conduct as the first of the Apostles. In like manner, after the Ascension of the Lord, he everywhere acts as head of the Church. After his seven years' episcopate at Antioch (36-42), the Prince of the Apostles transferred the field of his missionary labors to Rome, the capital of the heathen world. It is beyond all doubt, that Peter, having come to Rome, founded there the Roman Church, directed it as chief pastor and, finally, there underwent martyrdom. His episcopate at Rome lasted twenty-five years (42-67); but during this period he frequently left the city of Rome to work elsewhere for the propagation of Christianity. According to the most ancient tradition, Peter first lived in Rome beyond the Tiber, and near the house which was afterward replaced by the church of St. Cecilia. But after converting the family of the senator Pudens to Christianity, he withdrew into the senator's house, taking up therein his permanent abode. The fidelity and firmness of faith of the Roman community was already at that date celebrated throughout the whole world; in the bloody storms of persecution a great number of Christians suffered martyrdom at Rome. As its most noble victims fell, the glorious Princes of the Apostles, Sts. Peter and Paul, at Rome on the same day, June 29, and in the same year A. D. 67, after they had previously been imprisoned together for some months in the Mammertine prison, beneath *Ara Coeli*, at the foot of the Capitol. On the Ostian

road is seen the chapel where, according to the legend, the Apostles, when going to death, took leave of each other. To the west, beyond the Tiber, on the Janiculum Hill, where now stands the Church of *S. Pietro in Montorio*, and in sight of the Eternal City, as a faithful imitator of his Lord and Master, St. Peter died the violent death of the Cross; the humble disciple begged the favor of shedding his blood for his Lord with his head downward to the earth. His original place of sepulture was on the Vatican Hill, where the grandest and noblest mausoleum of the world, St. Peter's Church, has now stood for ages, lifting its lofty dome heavenward. After the tomb of Christ, that of the Prince of the Apostles is the most celebrated place of pilgrimage in the world; churches and altars that bear his name, are as numerous as the stars in the heavens. "Peter stands before us all as the man of lively faith, of unshaken hope, of the most ardent love of God and men, full of noble dignity, and, at the same time, full of the most profound humility, full of majestic zeal against injustice and untruth, against deceit and sin, and, withal, full of loving sympathy for all the spiritual and corporal sufferings of his fellowmen, full of peace and joy in his own sufferings,' wholly penetrated with zeal for the glory of Jesus Christ and the salvation of souls redeemed by the Precious Blood of his Master, fully persuaded of the one great truth, that in no other name is salvation given to men, but only in the name of Jesus crucified and risen from the dead. Thus Peter stands forth in bold relief as the man of truth,, the man of fact, the man full of life — in all the traits of his character and in his whole personality, transformed by grace, a monumental figure, an exalted prototype, as it were, of the Papacy and of the Church herself, as from the days of Peter till now she passes on through the world and through the centuries." (*Hundhausen*)

**St. Paul**, formerly called Saul, was born in the commercial city of Tarsus and enjoyed the rights of a Roman citizen. At an early age he came to Jerusalem, where he became a pupil under the instruction of the most renowned teacher of the law, Gamaliel. Saul was greatly gifted in mind amid heart; being of an ardent temperament, he became a violent defender of the ancestral Jewish laws, and when the persecution against the Christians broke out in Jerusalem, his rage against the Church of God knew no bounds. By a miracle of grace he was converted and called by the Lord Himself to the apostolate. The Gospel, which he preached, he neither received nor learned from man, but he had it by revelation from Jesus Christ Himself. His whole life, abounding in labors and sufferings, presents St. Paul to us as an ideal Apostle. He made five great apostolic journeys by water and land; for the first three he started from Antioch, the fourth, as a prisoner from Jerusalem to Rome, and the last from Rome to other places. They occupied more than twenty years of his life; during that time St. Paul passed through about thirty different countries and islands, established and consolidated Christian communities in more than forty cities. All these journeys were incessant labors in the vineyards of the Lord and continual campaigns to rescue countries and peoples from the kingdom of darkness and sin, and to conquer them for the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the kingdom of truth and holiness. By word and writing, by sermons and epistles, St. Paul brought everywhere the name of Jesus, that is, truth and grace, light and life, the doctrine and salvation of Christ to the children

of Israel as well as to heathen nations and rulers. The Apostle himself describes the labors, the captivities, the scourgings and the perils of death which he had to undergo. But all his many sufferings he endured with patience, fortitude and joy, because he suffered for the love of Jesus and of his brethren. The end of his apostolic career found him in Rome. Being a Roman citizen, he was put to death by the sword, in the south before the gates of the city, on the road to Ostia. According to the legend, his head, after being cut off, striking the ground, leaped three times; whereat there sprang up three fountains of water, which are still flowing at the church erected over the spot, the church of *S. Paolo alle tre Fontane*. One half of the body of St. Paul rests in St. Peter's Church in Rome, the other half in St. Paul's church outside the walls, and his head is in the basilica of St. John Lateran. The Eternal City is highly favored in its possessing the grave and the relics of the two Princes of the Apostles; both apostles jointly guard and rule by their heavenly protection and assistance the Mother Church. "O happy Rome, consecrated by the glorious blood of the two Princes of the Apostles; dyed red with their blood, you shine more resplendently than all the glory of the world."

**St. Andrew** was the first to recognize the Messiah through St. John the Baptist, and full of joy he at once led his brother Simon Peter to the Lord. His arduous and successful missionary labors were first exercised in Scythia; he, at last, went to the city of Patrae, in Achaia, where he suffered an heroic martyrdom (Nov. 30, 62). The Governor Aegeas interrogated him; the Apostle made a solemn profession of the Sacrifice of the Cross and of the Altar; whereupon he was condemned to die fastened to the Cross. St. Andrew is the Apostle of the Cross. How magnificent is the prayer in which, filled with enthusiasm, he salutes the Cross as a boon ardently loved and long desired: "Hail, precious Cross, Thou hast been consecrated by the body of my Lord, and adorned with His limbs as with rich jewels. How long have I yearned for thee! At length thou art granted to my desires! Receive the disciple of the Master who hung upon thee; take me from among men, and present me to Him, who through thee redeemed me!" He remained on the Cross two days and a night, making of it a pulpit, whence he announced Christ crucified, preaching Him, not only by his sufferings and the example of his virtues, but also with earnest and moving words. Finally, a bright light encompassed him, and the Cross became for him the ladder to Heaven. Maximilla, a disciple of Christ, took the body down from the Cross and interred it. This holy body is preserved in the cathedral of Amalfi, and his head is in St. Peter's in Rome. It is the common opinion that he suffered on a cross composed of two beams diagonally crossing each other; hence this cross bears the name of St. Andrew's cross (X).

**St. James**, called **the Greater** (*Major*), was a brother of St. John, both being sons of Zebedee. By reason of their fiery zeal and ardent character, they were called by the Lord "Sons of Thunder" (*Boanerges*). Peter, John and James were distinguished and privileged by the Lord above the other Apostles; for these three alone were permitted to remain with Him when He raised the daughter of Jairus to life, again at the

Transfiguration on Mount Thabor, and, finally, during His agony in the garden. After the Ascension of Jesus, St. James preached in Judea and Samaria; then, according to an ancient tradition, he hastened to distant Spain, scattering there the first seed of Christian truth. Of all the Apostles, St. James the Greater was the first to drink the chalice of the Lord, as he was put to death by the sword in Jerusalem by Herod Agrippa only nine or ten years after the death of Christ. His holy remains were at an early date carried to Spain, and there they rest even now at *Santiago de Compostella*, the capital of the province of Galicia, which, besides Rome and Jerusalem, belongs to the most celebrated places of pilgrimage of all Christendom.

**St. John**, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” was more favored and privileged by the Lord than all the other Apostles. The Lord honored him, on account of his innocence and virginity, with His closest friendship and intimacy. *Hic est Joannes qui privilegio amoris praecepit ceteris altius a Domino meruit honorari (Responsory of the Church)*. In that blessed hour, when Jesus, by the institution of the Holy Eucharist, gave to His own the greatest proof of His love, John was permitted to repose on the breast, on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, —thence drawing light and love in abundance. “The floods of the Gospel he drank from the fountain of the sacred bosom of the Lord; blessed Apostle to whom the heavenly secrets have been revealed!” Then when dying on the Cross, the Lord bequeathed and delivered over to His favorite disciple what to Him was most dear and precious, namely, His holy Mother. “Jesus loved John so tenderly,” says the Church, “because the prerogative of chastity made him worthy of greater love; for chosen by the Lord as a virgin, he always remained a virgin. To the virginal alone has the Lord entrusted the Virgin, to the virgin disciple He has given the Virgin Mother.” St. John first exercised his apostolate in Palestine; later on, history points him out to us at Ephesus, in which city, as the last surviving Apostle, and by reason of his exalted spirituality and sanctity, he exercised all along a powerful influence on the Church of Asia Minor, until he there died and was buried at a very advanced age. But is the glory of martyrdom wanting to St. John? By no means. Under the emperor Domitian, he was dragged to Rome, and there thrown into a caldron of boiling oil; but by a miracle he came forth from it purer, fresher and more vigorous than before. He was then banished by the same tyrant (81-96) to the island of Patmos. The martyrdom which he underwent in Rome is celebrated by the Church on May 6, by a special feast under the title: “St. John before the Latin Gate.” At the place of his martyrdom there is a church and chapel erected in his honor.

**St. Thomas**, called the *Twin*, was slow to believe in the Resurrection of the Lord; but he afterwards proved himself a fervent advocate and propagator of the faith among the Parthians in the East; on his way thither he is said to have baptized the three Magi. He penetrated as far as India, where, by the command of the king, he was killed by a stroke of the lance, or, according to another story, stoned and clubbed to death. As a spiritual architect, he is regarded as the patron of architecture and is, therefore, represented as holding a hewn stone or a square.

**St. James, the Less** (*Minor*), being a relative of the Lord, is called His brother. With Sts. Peter and John, he is designated by St. Paul as a “Pillar” of the Church. He is the only Apostle who did not preach the Gospel to the heathens; he was raised by St. Peter to be the first Bishop of Jerusalem. On account of his piety and austerity he was surnamed *the Just* and highly esteemed even by the Jews. Because of his courageous confession of the divinity of Christ, he was thrown down from the battlements of the Temple; he was still able to rise to his knees, but the rabble fell upon him with stones, and a fuller gave him the death-blow by hitting him on the head with his club, such as is used in dressing cloth (between 60-64). The fuller’s club is his distinctive mark; his feast occurs on May 1 (transferred by Pope Pius XII to May 11 in favor of the feast of St. Joseph the Worker – *Ed.*).

**St. Philip** was the fourth of the fishermen of Bethsaida in Galilee called by the Saviour to the Apostolate. In the Gospel he is frequently mentioned with distinction. His touching supplication is well known: “Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us!” and the reply of Jesus: “Philip, he that seeth Me, seeth the Father also!” He exercised his apostolate in Phrygia, and died in Hierapolis on a cross, stoned to death by the enraged populace. The bodies of the holy Apostles Philip and James repose under the high altar of the Church of the Twelve Apostles in Rome, where quite recently they were exhumed and examined. Pictures of St. James represent him with the instrument of his martyrdom, the cross, formed like a Latin T.

**St. Bartholomew** is probably the Nathaniel mentioned in the Gospel, who was led to the Lord by Philip. He preached in Arabia Felix, in India and in Greater Armenia, where at Albanopolis he was flayed alive and decapitated. Relics of his holy body are preserved under the high altar of the Church of St. Bartholomew, in the isle of the Tiber, at Rome. The Emperor Otto III brought them to this church built by himself. He is often represented with a knife in his hand, as the instrument of his cruel death.

**St. Matthew** is both Apostle and Evangelist. He was a publican when the Lord called him. Of his apostolic labors almost nothing reliable is known. Arabia and Ethiopia are specially mentioned as the field of his zeal. According to some authors he was burned alive, according to others he was killed with a spear. Since A. D. 930 his holy body has reposed in the metropolitan church at Salerno (a magnificent structure erected by Robert Guiscard), where he is also honored as the patron of the city.

**St. Simon, the Zealot**, is in the veneration of the Church connected with **St. Judas Thaddeus**, who was a brother of St. James the Less. Both consumed and sacrificed their lives by their labors in Mesopotamia and Persia, where Simon was cut in two with a sword and Judas was shot to death with arrows. Their holy bodies repose in the cathedral of St. Peter in Rome. Here the record of the Apostles closes, that the holy number twelve, be not exceeded. For the number twelve is symbolical “of the universality of the Church of Christ, which extends to the four quarters of the world, in the unity of faith in the triune God. Hence the heavenly city Jerusalem, this figure

of the Church of Christ in its completion, has four walls and in each wall three portals, the twelve entrances being built upon twelve precious stones which bear the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb” (Apoc. 21). The Apostles not only scattered the seed of the divine word, but they labored to bring it to maturity by watering it with the sweat of their brow and fructifying it by shedding their hearts’ blood. Built and resting upon the chief cornerstone Christ, the Apostles have thus become the foundation of the Church, which is called Apostolic.□

### **The Saints Named Before The Consecration**

*As found in the prayer: Communicantes, after the Apostles are named.* Here the record of the Apostles closes, that the holy number, twelve, be not exceeded. For the number twelve is symbolical of the universality of the Church of Christ, which extends to the four quarters of the world, in the unity of faith in the triune God. Hence the heavenly city, Jerusalem, this figure of the Church of Christ in its completion, has four walls, and in each wall three portals, that the nations at morning, and noon, and evening, and midnight may be admitted by Baptism, in the name of God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the twelve entrances being built upon twelve precious stones, which bear the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb (Apoc. 21). The Apostles not only scattered the seed of the divine word, but they labored to bring it to maturity by watering it with the sweat of their brow and fructifying it by shedding their hearts’ blood. Built and resting upon the chief corner-stone Christ, the Apostles have thus become the foundation of the Church, which, consequently, is called and is Apostolic. Martyrdom of blood is the characteristic trait of the saints of the first four centuries; therefore, twelve martyrs of these ancient times are now mentioned in the Canon. Among them are five Popes, a bishop, a deacon and five lay persons. Even at a very early period, these saints were held in universal and high esteem in Rome. This explains their insertion in the Canon.

a) First, five Popes are mentioned:

**St. Linus**, the first successor of St. Peter in the See of Rome and, therefore, the second Pope, is assuredly the same from whom St. Paul sends a salutation to Timothy. He was converted to Christianity by St. Peter, and, as a distinguished assistant of the Prince of the Apostles, he may indeed frequently have supplied his place, when the latter was obliged to leave Rome for a time, in order to preach the Gospel elsewhere. He ruled the Church from 67 to 76 (?). He was decapitated and buried in the Vatican by the side of St. Peter. Under Pope Urban VIII, a tomb was discovered there, bearing the simple inscription: *Linus*. His feast occurs on the twenty-third of September.

**St. Cletus** (76-88?) succeeded St. Linus. It is believed that he erected a tombstone to St. Peter, who had ordained him a priest. His feast falls on the twenty-sixth of April.



**St. Clement** is reckoned among the Apostolic Fathers; he sat in the Chair of Peter from 88 to 97 (?). St. Irenaeus writes of him: "In the third place, after the Apostles, the Roman episcopate received Clement, who had seen the Prince of the Apostles, had associated with them, had listened to their sermons and had the Apostolic tradition before his eyes." St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Philippians, mentions him among "his co-laborers, whose names are written in the Book of Life." According to the testimony of ancient writers, St. Clement was endowed with all the qualities of mind and heart that were requisite for the highest ecclesiastical dignities. The legend relates that the Emperor Trajan banished him to the Taurian Chersonesus (Crimea), where he found two thousand Christians condemned to work in the marble quarries, who suffered greatly for want of water. Clement prayed, and on an adjacent hill appeared a lamb, from beneath whose right foot a spring of fresh water issued forth. This miracle brought about the conversion of many of the inhabitants. Then Trajan commanded St. Clement to be cast into the sea with an anchor fastened to his neck. The Christians on the shore fell upon their knees and prayed; and behold! The sea receded three thousand paces, and there appeared, built by the hands of angels, a marble temple in which the body of the saint, together with the anchor, was found. The mortal remains of the martyr are said to have been brought to Rome by the Greek missionaries, Sts. Cyril and Methodius, during the pontificate of Pope Hadrian II, and placed in the very ancient basilica of St. Clement, near the Coliseum, of which mention is already made by St. Jerome. His feast is celebrated on the twenty-third of November.

In the fourth place comes the name of **Xystus** (the Greek form of Sixtus). During the first three centuries, there were two Popes of this name. **Sixtus I** (115 - 125?) governed the Church during the reign of the Emperor Hadrian, when the lot of the Christians was a hard and painful one; he suffered martyrdom and was buried in the Vatican near St. Peter. His feast occurs on the sixth of April.

Far better known and more celebrated is **Sixtus II**, a Greek by birth. His pontificate (257-258) fell during the stormy period of the Valerian persecution of the Christians. In spite of the Emperor's prohibition, he ventured to hold divine service in the Catacombs. Discovered by the heathen soldiers and apprehended, he was dragged into the city before the tribunal and condemned; afterward he was again led back to the Catacomb of Praetextatus, in which he had previously celebrated the Holy Sacrifice, and was beheaded on, or near his episcopal throne. The crown of martyrdom was granted to him on August 6, 258. His body now rests in the very ancient church situated on the Appian Way, *S. Sisto vecchio* in Rome. Which Sixtus is it — the first or the second — that is commemorated in the Canon? Opinions are divided. To prove that Sixtus I is intended, it is asserted that the five Popes are mentioned in chronological order; now only Sixtus I reigned before Cornelius, hence he is mentioned in the Canon. More and stronger reasons are in favor of Sixtus II. His memory has ever been highly celebrated in the Church; the Catacombs prove this

by many pictures, illustrations, and prayers. As Sixtus II, in his martyrdom, preceded his glorious Deacon Lawrence, thus is he likewise mentioned before him in the Canon. St. Sixtus II, it is true, occupied the Papal chair only after St. Cornelius; but here there was a reason for departing from the chronological order and placing the name of Sixtus before that of Cornelius. For this was done that the names of the two Saints, Cornelius and Cyprian, might not be here separated, as they were otherwise always connected in the veneration of the Church. Already in the most ancient Roman liturgy both have a common Mass, as is still the case at the present day. Perhaps, also, in time the names of Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian were inserted in the Canon after that of St. Sixtus.

**St. Cornelius**, who had distinguished himself in all the grades of the Church service, ascended the Chair of Peter in the year 251; he accepted the supreme dignity only by constraint. St. Cyprian extols him as quiet and modest, humble and virginal. Under the tyrant Emperor Decius, St. Cornelius was in constant expectation of death. Also under the Emperor Gaius, in the year 252, a violent storm arose against the Christians in Rome; but they, with the Pope at their head, maintained the faith with such unanimity, fortitude and strength as to excite universal joy and jubilation, and St. Cyprian could not sufficiently praise and admire them. St. Cornelius was banished to Centum Cehlae (*Civitavecchia*), and there died a martyr on September 14, 252; as on the same day six years later (258) the holy Bishop Cyprian of Carthage was martyred, both names are, therefore, usually mentioned together. Their joint feast is celebrated on September sixteenth.

b) After the Popes in the Canon come a Bishop and a Deacon: **St. Cyprian** was born in the beginning of the third century at Carthage. He was of distinguished rank, rich, very talented, and had received an education commensurate with his great abilities. Only in a more mature age was he won over to the Catholic Faith; his baptism took place about the year 246. He distributed his great wealth among the poor, made a vow of perpetual chastity, and spent his time in prayer and the study of the sacred sciences. From the very beginning of his conversion, he was adorned with brilliant virtues and uncommon graces. How happy he regarded himself in the possession of Christian truth and grace, his letter to Donatus proves, wherein (Chap 14) he, among other things exclaims: "There only is rest, gentle and not deceitful; and there is only imperishable and stable peace, where, rescued from the turmoil of a storm-tossed world, we have cast our anchor of salvation in the safe bottom of salvation, in order that, with our eyes turned away from earth to heaven, and being admitted to the service of the Lord, united in spirit with God, we may seek our fame in this alone, that we regard as far beneath us, that which in the esteem of other men is great and glorious. Whosoever has raised himself above the world, can wish for nothing that appertains to the world, can desire nothing more of it." St. Cyprian was raised to the priesthood, and, as he was so greatly renowned for his learning and exemplary manner of life, he was promoted to the episcopal see of Carthage in the year 248. The ten years' episcopacy of the saint (248-258) fell during the time of the most violent

persecution and of other exterior misfortunes besides. Powerful in word and deed, St. Cyprian fulfilled, with indefatigable zeal, his pastoral duties for the salvation of the faithful confided to his care, and for the welfare of the whole Church. He combated for the unity and discipline of the Church against heretics and schismatics, animated all to cheerful endurance of martyrdom, and consumed himself in the ardor of Christian charity. His life, rich in blessings, was terminated by the glorious death of a martyr. He was put to death by the sword in the public place of Carthage, on September 14, 258. His memory has always been held in benediction by the Church

**St. Lawrence** is highly extolled by the Fathers and held in great veneration by all Christian nations. "As Jerusalem was glorified by Stephen, so is Rome renowned by its Lawrence from the rising to the setting of the sun," says the holy Pope Leo in a sermon on the feast of this Saint. Spain is regarded as his native country; but he was brought up and educated in Rome. Sixtus II ordained him deacon, and made him the first of the seven deacons of the Roman Church, wherefore he is also called Archdeacon of the Pope. This was a most important office; for it included the administration of the treasures of the Church. Exceedingly glorious is the martyrdom of the young Levite. When Pope Sixtus II was being dragged to the Catacombs for execution, Lawrence cried out to him: "Whither goest thou, Father, without thy son? Where art thou hastening, holy priest, without thy deacon? Never wert thou accustomed to offer the Holy Sacrifice without thy minister." And how singularly consoling are the words of the highpriest to his deacon: "I am not forsaking thee, my son; greater combats await thee. Cease to weep; after three days thou wilt follow me, the Levite, his priest." During those three days, the deacon hastened through the city, distributed the goods of the Church to the needy, and in so doing he wrought several miracles. To the prefect of the city who ordered him to deliver up the treasures of the Church, he presented the poor of Christ as the treasures of the Church. On this account the heathen became enraged, and subjected the young hero to all manner of torments. St. Lawrence was scourged, struck with leaden balls, stretched on the rack, and burned with red hot metallic plates. The judge then threatened him with an entire night of tortures. Radiant with an unearthly brightness, the intrepid sufferer exclaimed: "For me this night has no darkness, but breaks forth into the bright light of day" - *Mea nox obscurum non habet, sed omnia in luce clarescunt*. Afterward he was laid on a burning gridiron, whence he addressed the tyrant: "Behold, wretch, the power of my God; your heat for me is refreshing coolness, but it will end for you in inextinguishable fire." In the midst of the tortures, the constant martyr prayed to Christ: "On the gridiron I have not denied Thee, my God, and over the fire I have confessed Thee, my Savior. Thou hast tried and examined my heart in the night; Thou hast proved me by fire, and found no falsehood in me. My soul adhered to Thee, whilst my flesh burned for Thee." He then prayed for the triumph of Christianity in the city of Rome, and closed his heroic combat with the words: "I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou dost permit me to enter through the portals of heaven." Thus his indomitable soul passed to the glory of God on August 10, 258. On earth, the illustrious archdeacon and martyr has ever been loaded with honor and praise. Above

his grave, Constantine had the magnificent basilica of St. Lawrence erected outside the walls; It is one of the five patriarchal, and one of the seven principal churches of Rome. There beneath the high altar repose, in a marble sarcophagus, the united relics of both the deacons, Sts. Lawrence and Stephen. Many other churches were built and consecrated in Rome and in other places in honor of St. Lawrence.

c) Finally, in the Canon five laymen are commemorated:

**St. Chrysogonus** converted many heathens in Rome to Christianity; he was also the teacher of St. Anastasia in Christian doctrine, as also her counsel and consoler, when, on account of her faith, she had many persecutions to suffer. He was arrested in Rome under Diocletian, and, after long imprisonment, was sent to Aquileja where he was beheaded about the year 304. A portion of his head is preserved and venerated in the ancient Church of Chrysogonus, which is situated in Rome, in the Trastevere, and is in possession of the Trinitarians. The feast occurs on November twenty-fourth.

**John and Paul** were brothers. As distinguished Romans, they were entrusted with high positions of honor at the court of St. Constantia, a daughter of Constantine the Great. When she had retired from the world, the two brothers lived as “Men of Mercy,” devoting themselves to works of charity. The apostate, Emperor Julian, wished to compel them to sacrifice to the idols, and to enter his service; but such an order they rejected with contempt. And, for this reason, Julian had them secretly decapitated in their own palace, which stood on the declivity of Mount Coelius, June 26, 362. On this site, as early as the fourth century, the Church of Sts. John and Paul was built in honor of the martyred brothers. Their bodies rest in a magnificent sarcophagus under the high altar. In the nave of the church, surrounded by an iron railing, may be seen the marble slab which was stained with their blood and which annually on their feast (June twenty-sixth) is strewn with flowers.

**Saints Cosmas and Damian** were also brothers, descended from a distinguished race in Arabia. They practiced medicine in Roman territory and that without remuneration. Their learning, their skill in healing, their devout mode of life, all combined, won for them universal confidence and high esteem. Their acts of benevolence gained for the Christian religion many adherents. After enduring many torments, they were at last —probably in 127 — decapitated at Egaea, in Cilicia. Pope Felix IV (526-529) built, at Rome, the Church of Sts. Cosmas and Damian, and brought to it the relics of the saintly martyred brothers. Both are honored as patrons of physicians and of the science of medicine; their feast occurs on September twenty-seventh. In the Roman Canon, only martyrs are named before and after the Consecration: this distinction is justly due to them. They have merited it by the bloody sacrifice of their life; they appear as the ripest and most glorious fruit of the Sacrifice of Christ. They resembled the Savior, not in life merely, but also in death. For Christ they lived, for Him they died; in return for the Sacrifice of His love, they offered the sacrifice of the world and of themselves -amid untold torments and

sufferings. The virtues of fortitude and patience, of faith and of love which they practiced in a heroic degree shone resplendent in them.

### **The Saints Named After The Consecration**

*As found in the prayer: Nobis quoque peccatoribus*

The first three words “to us also, Thy sinful servants” (*nobis quoque peccatoribus*) are the only words in the Canon that are said in a slightly raised tone of voice, that is, half aloud. The priest, at the same time, strikes his breast. Both (the somewhat loud tone of voice, and the striking of the breast) indicate to the celebrant with what great sorrow and compunction he is to make the acknowledgment of his sinfulness, and admonish all the faithful present, to unite with the officiating priest in these selfsame penitential sentiments which animate him, since he recites this prayer also for them and in their name. We acknowledge and confess ourselves in all humility to be but poor sinners, for we thereby draw on ourselves God’s favor and mercy. Yes, sinners we are all before God, and great sinners indeed. This we shall profoundly and sorrowfully realize if we but sincerely examine our entire life. Filled with shame we shall then have to acknowledge, alas, so many sins and yet so little penance! To obtain admittance into the kingdom of heaven we must pray for it, in as much as we place all our confidence in the greatness and abundance of the Divine mercies. Animated with this sentiment, we cry out to God that He would mercifully grant us “some part and fellowship” with His holy Apostles and Martyrs. The immaculate and imperishable inheritance of the kingdom of heaven is prepared for the totality of the redeemed; but the individual man will share therein according to the measure of his merits, virtue and holiness. All the happiness of the citizens of heaven proceeds from God’s eternal and infinite glory. Our possession, our inheritance, our share in the land of the living will be God Himself — the clear vision, the ravishing love and the blissful enjoyment of God. The possession of the Supreme Good will, therefore, be imparted to us in union and in communion with the other blessed; the ravishing society of all the other citizens of heaven is a fresh source of the purest, sweetest joys. Of the saints of heaven, some Apostles and Martyrs are mentioned by name in this prayer; fifteen in all (eight male and seven female saints), who all underwent the violent death of martyrdom.

At the head of the list in the prayer is **St. John the Baptist**, as the enumeration of the male saints is regulated by the time of their martyrdom. In the profoundest seclusion from the world, he prepared himself by a life of contemplation and severe asceticism for his vocation: to go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people, unto the remission of their sins (Luke I:76-77). His whole appearance and penitential preaching made a wonderful impression on the people. He closed his blessed labors by a martyr’s death, for he was beheaded because he had freely and severely censured the adulterous union of Herod with Herodias. His martyrdom is celebrated on August 29. Through heavenly revelation his head was later on found, and is now preserved and honored in the ancient Church of *S. Silvestro*

*in Capite*. St. John has ever been highly honored in the Church; numerous churches are dedicated to him; many cities and countries have chosen him as their patron.

**St. Stephen** heads the brilliant host of Christian Martyrs, who, after the death of the Savior, shed their blood for divine truth. He belongs to those seven wise and pious men who were ordained as the first deacons by the Apostles; but, before all the others, he is praised in Holy Scripture as a man “full of grace and strength,” “full of faith and of the Holy Ghost,” “who did great signs and miracles among the people.” As deacon, with loving solicitude, he exercised the charge of caring for the poor and the sick; he likewise, with great wisdom and power, preached the doctrine of Christ to the Jews. They obstinately resisted him, and in their fury they stoned to death this courageous preacher of the truth, which they hated. This took place in the Valley of Josaphat at the Brook Cedron. Yet “the stones of the brook were sweet to him,” says the Church, at the same time putting these words in his mouth: “Because my flesh was stoned for Thee, my God, my soul has adhered to Thee!” Overwhelmed by the rain of stones and falling on his knees, he exclaimed: “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” and then “he slept in the Lord.” Although ordained as deacon by the Apostles, St. Stephen preceded the Apostles by his blessed and victorious death; though inferior in dignity, he became the superior in suffering; and though a scholar in doctrine, he became the master in its profession. The martyr’s crown of precious gems now shines gloriously on his head; the celebration of the day of his death (December 26) follows the feast of the Nativity of our Lord, and the wonderful finding of his relics is separately commemorated (August 3). In the sixth century the principal part of his body was taken to Rome and placed beside the remains of St. Lawrence under the high altar of the Basilica of *St. Lawrence Outside the Walls* in a splendid marble sarcophagus.

**St. Matthias**, after the Ascension of the Lord, was by the will of God called to the Apostolate — in place of the traitor Judas. It is said that he was beheaded with an axe, and that St. Helena brought a portion of his relics to Treves. His head is preserved in the Church of *S. Maria Maggiore* in Rome. His feast occurs on the 24th, or (in leap years), on the 25th of February.

**St. Barnabas** was “an excellent man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith.” He was originally called Joseph. The Apostles gave him the name of Barnabas (Son of Consolation), to indicate that he consoled and encouraged others by his supernatural enthusiasm and power of speaking. St. Barnabas is regarded by many only as an assistant and companion to the Apostles, as one resembling the Apostles; but many more and better reasons favor the opinion that Barnabas, like St. Paul, was an apostle in the strict sense of the term. In consequence of a supernatural revelation, Paul and Barnabas were ordained with prayer and the imposing of hands, and furnished with all authority; they were to complete the Apostolic College and to take the place of the two Saints James, of whom the elder had suffered martyrdom, and the younger was restricted to the charge of the Mother-Church of Jerusalem. St. Barnabas was a Levite

and came from Cyprus. It is probable that he belonged to the seventy-two disciples of the Lord. After having been consecrated Bishop at Antioch, he made (44 or 45) an extended missionary tour with St. Paul; later on he separated from him and labored chiefly in his native island Cyprus, where his renowned apostolate was crowned with martyrdom (between 53-76). It is not certain, though probable, that St. Barnabas preached in Upper Italy. Toward the end of the fifth century, the body of the saint was discovered in a cave at Salamis, in Cyprus. His feast occurs on June 11, the day of his death.

**St. Ignatius of Antioch**, who had the additional Greek name *Qeofdros* (Bearer of God). According to a pleasing legend, he was blessed, when a child, by Our Lord. He was a pupil of the Apostles, and also the second successor of St. Peter in the See of Antioch. Under the emperor Trajan, he was sentenced to death, dragged in chains to Rome, and there in the Colosseum, on December 20, 107, exposed to the wild beasts. This greatly celebrated bishop burned with an ardent desire for martyrdom, as is evident, from the letters, so full of unction, which on the way to Rome he wrote to different communities. "And the Lord hath given him his heart's desire, and hath not withholden from him the will of his lips" (Ps. 20:3); for the lions fell upon him, tore and ate his body, so that only the larger and harder bones remained. Since the middle of the seventh century, his holy relics have been preserved in the Basilica of St. Clement at Rome, where they were deposited on February 1; hence his feast falls on this day. Let us quote some of the glorious words which he wrote to the Christians at Rome. "You cannot prove your tender love for me better than by allowing me to consecrate myself in sacrifice — now, since the altar is erected; be content, in a holy choir of love, to chant thanks to the Father, in Christ Jesus. Well is it for me if I perish to the world, so that I may arise for God! Allow me to become the food of beasts, that through them I may attain to God. I am the wheat of God and must be ground by the teeth of beasts, so as to become the pure bread of Christ. Fire and cross, multitudes of wild beasts, the tearing of the body, the cutting into pieces of my limbs, the grinding of my bones; in brief, whatever of tortures the devil can invent, let all come upon me, if I but gain Jesus Christ. All the delights of earth I account as nothing, as nothing all the kingdoms of the world; better is it for me to die for Jesus Christ than to reign over all the bounds of the earth. Let me imitate the sufferings of my God. My Love is, indeed, crucified. There is no fire burning in me that tends to the things of earth, but a fountain of living water arises in my heart crying unto me: Come to the Father! I desire only the Bread of God, the heavenly Bread of Life, which is the Flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; this only drink do I desire, His Blood, which is imperishable love and life eternal!"

**St. Alexander I** was the fifth Pope after St. Peter. He also brought about many wonderful conversions in Rome. On May 3, 115 (?), he was beheaded outside of Rome on the Nomentan Way, together with the priests Eventius and Theodulus. His holy body now reposes in the Church of St. Sabina at Rome. His feast occurs on May 3.

**St. Marcellinus**, priest, and **St. Peter**, exorcist, of the Roman Church. St. Peter, while in prison, had delivered the daughter of the jailer, Artemius, from an evil spirit, whereupon the whole family of Artemius was converted and baptized by the priest Marcellinus. Thereupon Sts. Peter and Marcellinus were frightfully tortured and led outside of the city for execution, as far as the so-called Black Forest, where they themselves with joy cleared the place in the thickets, and then bowed their head under the sword. On account of their martyrdom the place was afterwards called the White Forest. In the ninth century, their bodies were brought to Seligenstadt by Eginhard, the private secretary of Charlemagne, where they repose in a magnificent silver shrine. Their feast is kept on June 2.

The two youthful heroines, **Felicitas** and **Perpetua**, suffered at Carthage in North Africa. They were of noble birth and well-educated. They were confined in a prison filled with darkness, heat, smoke and filth. "The day of their victory dawned," say their Acts, "and from the prison they went forth to the amphitheater as to Heaven, cheerful, with radiant countenances, trembling, but with joy, not with fear." The confessors who accompanied them stepped before the judgment-seat and cried to the one seated thereon: "Now thou judgest, but soon thou wilt be judged by God." The young women were cruelly scourged, and then cast before a wild cow; finally they were beheaded. This was in the year 202, in the persecution of the Christians under the Emperor Severus. Their feast occurs on March 7<sup>th</sup>.

**St. Agatha**. Two cities of Sicily - Palermo and Catana - contest the honor of her birthplace. It is certain that under the Emperor Decius, in the year 251, she bore off the crown of martyrdom at Catana. This holy virgin was renowned far and wide for her nobility and wealth, as well as for her beauty and virtue. Already in her childhood she had chosen Jesus for her spouse, and clung to Him with undivided love. Accused of being a Christian, she was dragged before the heathen judge, Quintianus. This villain endeavored, by all manner of mean artifices, to overcome her chaste mind and her courage. But, like unto a rock in the ocean, the virgin remained unmoved and unshaken; as the dust beneath her feet, she accounted all that the world could offer. In prison she was miraculously healed of her burning wounds by St. Peter. Afterward the wretched tyrant gave orders that the saint, miraculously healed, be rolled on sharp potsherds and glowing coals. Again brought back to prison, the saint prayed: "Lord, Thou who hast created me and preserved me since my childhood, who hast delivered my heart from the love of the world and protected my body from perdition, who hast made me triumph over tortures and bonds, over iron and fire, I pray Thee, receive my spirit from this earth into the bosom of Thy mercy!" Thereupon she slept in the peace of the Lord, and her pure soul flew heavenward. The tomb of St. Agatha, made glorious by God with many miracles, became the refuge of the Christians, and even of the heathens. There also was kept the wonderful veil that was not burned, but only somewhat crimsoned, when the saint was thrown into the blazing fire. One year after her death, the neighboring volcano of Etna burst forth in torrents of fire, which



moved toward the city of Catana, and threatened its destruction. Then the inhabitants ran in terror to her tomb, took the veil, and held it in the direction of the stream of lava. At that very instant, it took another course toward the ocean and the city was saved. This event took place on the anniversary of the holy death of the virgin martyr, February 5, which is still observed as her feastday in the Church of God. Consequently, St. Agatha is the much implored patroness against dangers of fire: as such she is particularly honored in the Black Forest of Germany. There her feast is made resplendent with the brightness of innumerable lights.

**St. Lucy** suffered martyrdom about 304, in the great persecution of Diocletian against the Christians. She came from Syracuse, was of noble lineage, and at an early age vowed perpetual chastity to the Lord. Her mother was taken ill with dysentery, and in this emergency she made a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Agatha to implore her restoration to health. Here St. Lucy was thrown into an ecstasy, and St. Agatha appeared to her in great glory, surrounded by angels, speaking thus to her: "My sister Lucy, virgin consecrated to God, why dost thou request of me what thou thyself canst do for thy mother? Behold, thy faith hath given efficacy to the words of thy mouth, and she is now cured." From that time Lucy sold her ornaments and her goods in order to give the proceeds to the poor and the sick. Accused of being a Christian, she appeared before the tribunal of the heathen judge, Paschasius, whereupon being commanded to offer sacrifice to the idols, she answered: "It is a pure and undefiled worship of God to console and support widows and orphans in their tribulation. This have I now done for three years, and, after offering my possessions, I shall gladly offer also myself in sacrifice." Because she had said: "They that live chastely and devoutly are a temple of God, and the Holy Ghost dwells in them," they wished to drag her to a brothel, but the Lord rendered her as immovable as a pillar, so that no power could thence move her. Then a funeral pyre, filled with pitch, rosin, and oil was built around her and ignited: but the flames also left her untouched. Finally, a sword was thrust through her neck; but she continued to live until she had received the Holy Viaticum from a priest, and had consoled the Christians who were standing around, by the announcement that peace was near at hand. On the spot in which she suffered, a church was erected. Her feast is kept on December 13. "In thy patience thou didst possess thy soul, O Lucy, spouse of Christ! Thou didst despise what is of the world, and now thou art resplendent among the choirs of angels; with thy own-blood thou didst conquer the enemy!" (*Antiphon of the Divine Office*)

**St. Agnes.** What is most to be admired in her: the charm of childhood, or virginal innocence, or manly heroism? Agnes, the child of wealthy and distinguished parents, was an elect child of grace; truly responding to her name (as St. Jerome writes), her childhood passed in spotless purity and lamblike innocence (*agnus* = lamb). A hundred years after her death, St. Ambrose said: "Even at the present day, many Roman maidens cherish the example of St. Agnes, as though she were still dwelling and living among us, animating themselves thereby to a perpetual preservation of purity." She gained the double crown of virginity and martyrdom at the tender age of thirteen. As

is related in the history of her life, she was, “though a child in years, yet mature in mind; a girl in stature, but a matron in spirit; beautiful in appearance and figure, but still more charming in soul by piety and modesty.” When asked in marriage, she described in animated, glorious words her espousals with the heavenly Bridegroom: “Depart from me, thou inciter to sin, thou food of death: depart from me; for already hath another Lover possession of my heart, who far surpasseth thee in nobility, and who hath given me incomparably more beautiful presents than those which thou hast offered me. With unrivalled treasures He hath enriched me; His nobility is the highest, His power the greatest, His appearance the most beautiful, His love the sweetest. The angels serve Him; sun and moon admire His beauty; by the perfume of virtue that exhales from His person the dead are awakened; by His touch the sick are cured. He hath prepared for me His bridal-chamber, where music and song resound; for Him I preserve fidelity, to Him I give myself entirely and without reserve!” She was taken to an abode of vice, but was protected by her guardian angel, who covered and shielded her with a garment of dazzling light. She was then thrown into a burning pile; but she made the Sign of the Cross over the flames and remained unharmed. Finally, she fell under the sword of the executioner (304), and thus the tender victim hastened to the nuptials of the Divine Lamb. She was buried a short distance from the city on the Nomentan Road in the villa of her parents. Her tomb became glorious, for on the spot arises one of the loveliest and most renowned churches of Rome (*S. Agnese fuori le mura*). “There annually the feast of the holy Virgin-Martyr is commemorated on the anniversary of her death (January 21).

**St. Cecilia.** She was a maiden of noble origin. From her earliest childhood she had wholly dedicated herself to the service of God by the vow of chastity. “She carried the Gospel always in her heart and never ceased by day or by night, praying and conversing on holy subjects.” By the command of her parents, she was urged to marry a wealthy and distinguished young man named Valerian, but he was a heathen. She consented only after receiving the assurance, through her guardian angel, that God would preserve her virginity, even after her marriage. By prayer and penance Cecilia prepared for this worldly nuptial day, and when at the banquet-feast the nuptial hymn was sung amidst the sound of musical instruments, Cecilia secretly sang in her heart to the Lord alone the hymn: “Keep Thou my heart and my body immaculate, that I may not be confounded!” And her heavenly Bridegroom sent an angel to her, who watched over the purity of her heart and body. “Like unto the wise and busy bee, Cecilia served the Lord,” and gained many souls to Him. The first among them were her husband, Valerian, and his brother, Tiburtius, who soon after obtained the crown of martyrdom. On this account, the pagan prefect of the city, Almachius, delivered her up to be suffocated in the bathroom of her own palace. She was confined in the chamber and “the oven was heated seven times more than usual,” but, like the youths of Babylon, she praised the Lord in the midst of the flames. The angel converted the scorching steam into a refreshing dew for her; “the fire had no power over her body, and not a hair of her head was singed, nor were her garments injured, nor had the smell of the fire reached her.” Upon this the tyrant sent the

executioner to her, who struck her thrice without severing her head. For three days she continued to live. The faithful hastened to the palace. She gave to all consolation and counsel. She ordered that her house should perpetually serve as a church, and then breathed forth her angelic soul. She was laid in a coffin of cypress wood, in the same posture in which she died, and was interred in the Catacombs of St. Callistus. In the year 821, her holy body was, in a celestial vision, discovered by Paschal I, who placed it under the high altar in the Cecilian Church in Trastevere. Almost eight hundred years later (namely in 1599), Cardinal Sfondrati found the holy martyr still in precisely the same posture in which she lay there on the floor of her house. Thus she still reposes, sweet and modest, enveloped in her rich attire, and in a penitential garment, on which the glorious traces of her blood are visible. She probably died in the year 177; her feast is celebrated on November 22. St. Cecilia is honored as the patroness of Church music, as she herself was versed in music, and is said frequently to have heard celestial melodies.

**St. Anastasia.** This holy widow and martyr is also of Roman origin. She had much to suffer from the cruelty of her pagan husband Publius. After his death, she gave herself over to practices of charity and mercy. In the persecution of Diocletian she obtained, on the day of our Lord's Nativity, 304, the palm of martyrdom by fire. On the spot where her house stood, a church (*S. Anastasia*) was erected in her honor; there under the high altar rests her body. Her feast is kept on December 25. St. John, the Seer of the New Law, "saw a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and in the sight of the Lamb, clothed with white robes and palms in their bands," and heard that "these are they who are come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and have made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Apoc. 7:9, 14). Of this countless multitude of bright martyrs, only a few are here mentioned in the Mass by name. They are merely those who in the principal city of Christendom were at all times held in great veneration. Here, after the male martyrs, the female martyrs also are mentioned, which is not the case in the list of the saints mentioned before the Consecration. The Church extols it as a miracle of divine power, that the Lord "should also have granted to the weaker sex the victory of martyrdom." How perfected does not Christ's power appear here in the most tender virgins! Their heavenly robes of glory not only shine with the splendor of an eternal brilliancy, but they are also crimsoned in their glory with the blood of a glorious sacrificial death. With the saints named and with "all the rest of the saints," whose number and names the all-seeing God alone knows, we, poor sinners, desire to be eternally united in heaven. This petition is expressed at the beginning of the prayer, and is now at the conclusion repeated again in other words, inasmuch as we implore admittance to the community of the heavenly citizens, and for such a fellowship with them we do not rely upon our own merit to obtain, but support our request for it on the merciful indulgence of God. We do not ask for the glory of the saints by reason of our own merits, but we confide in the merciful and gracious bounty of the Lord. If we wish for the glory of the saints, we must share their labors, sufferings and combats. Through

many tribulations only can we enter with all the saints into the joy of the Lord. We should, moreover, remember this when we beg for “some part and fellowship” with the Apostles and Martyrs; for if with them we suffer and die for Christ, with them also shall we be glorified. □