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THE HOLY FAMILY.

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HICKEY & CO., PUBLISHERS OF "THE VATICAN LIBRARY,"

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THE ROMAN CALENDAR.

MARCH, 1881.

DATE.	DAY.	FEAST.
1	Tuesday	St. Gregory II., Pope and Confessor, (from February 13.)
2	Wednesday	<i>Ash Wednesday</i> , the first day of the Lenten fast.
3	Thursday	St. Martina, Virgin and Martyr.
4	Friday	<i>The Crown of Thorns of our Lord.</i>
5	Saturday	St. Casimir, Confessor (from March 4.)
6	Sunday	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT.
7	Monday	St. Thomas of Aquin, Confessor and Doctor.
8	Tuesday	St. John of God, Confessor.
9	Wednesday	<i>Ember Wednesday</i> , St. Frances of Rome.
10	Thursday	The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.
11	Friday	<i>Ember Friday. The Lance and Nails of our Lord.</i>
12	Saturday	<i>Ember Saturday.</i> St. Gregory I., Pope, Confessor, Doctor.
13	Sunday	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT.
14	Monday	St. Simplicius, Pope, Confessor.
15	Tuesday	St. Zachary, Pope, Confessor.
16	Wednesday	St. Lucius, Pope, Martyr.
17	Thursday	St. Patrick, Bishop and Confessor.
18	Friday	<i>The Winding Sheet of our Lord.</i>
19	Saturday	ST. JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, Patron of the Universal Church.
20	Sunday	THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT.
21	Monday	St. Benedict, Abbot, Confessor.
22	Tuesday	<i>St. Gabriel, the Archangel</i> (from March 18.)
23	Wednesday	Feria.
24	Thursday	Feria.
25	Friday	ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY.
26	Saturday	<i>The Five Wounds of our Lord.</i>
27	Sunday	FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT.
28	Monday	St. Xystus III., Pope and Confessor.
29	Tuesday	Feria.
30	Wednesday	Feria.
31	Thursday	Feria.

MARCH 1.

St. David, Bishop.

ST. DAVID, son of Sant, prince of Cardigan and of Non, was born in that country in the fifth century, and from his earliest years gave himself wholly to the service of God. He began his religious life under St. Paulinus, a disciple of St. Germanus, Bishop of Auxerre, who had been sent to Britain by Pope St. Celestine to stop the ravage of the heresy of Pelagius, at that time abbot, as it is said, of Bangor. On the reappearance of that heresy, in the beginning of the sixth century, the bishops assembled at Brevi, and, unable to address the people that came to hear the word of truth, sent for St. David from his cell to preach to them. The Saint came, and it is related that as he preached the ground beneath his feet rose and became a hill, so that he was heard by an innumerable crowd. The heresy fell under the sword of the Spirit, and the Saint was elected Bishop of Caerleon on the resignation of St. Dubricius; but he removed the see to Menevia, a lone and desert spot, where he might with the monks serve God away from the noise of the world. He founded twelve monasteries, and governed his Church according to the canons sanctioned in Rome. At last, when about eighty years of age, he laid himself down, knowing that his hour was come. As his agony closed, our Lord stood before him in a vision, and the Saint cried out, 'Take me up with Thee,' and so gave up his soul on Tuesday, March 1st, 561.

ZEAL FOR THE FAITH.

The faith of Christ is that precious pearl which the wise merchant purchased with all his possessions, and there is no poverty where the riches of Christ are hid.

'The soul that journeys in the light and the truths of the Faith is safe against all error.'—*St. John of the Cross*.

St. David purged the land of heresy, and governed his people in the ways of God; diligent, laborious, and constant in prayer, as well as in the observance of regular discipline. At Matins he received the joyful news that his death was at hand, and the whole country round was moved. Then, on the following Sunday, he sang the High Mass, preached, and blessed the people, saying to them, 'Be joyful, and keep the Faith; on Tuesday I shall go the way of my fathers.'

MARCH 2.

St. Chad, Bishop.

CHAD was abbot of Lavingham, near Whitby. He was well read in the Holy Scriptures, and practised what he learnt therein. Contrary to the canons, he was placed in the see of York during the absence of St. Wilfred, and it became the duty of St. Theodore, as Primate of England, to request him to withdraw. Chad declared that he willingly resigned an office of which he had always deemed himself unworthy, and which obedience alone had forced him to accept. St. Theodore soon after appointed him bishop of the Mercians. He fixed his see at Lichfield, and for two years and a half spent himself in the care of his flock. Like the apostolic bishops of the North, Chad lived in humble poverty, making his visitations on foot. Amidst his unceasing labors he continued to yearn for the peace of his cloister, and often refreshed his soul by retiring to a monastery, and meditating on the eternal Sabbath, for which he sighed. Here he repaired when warned that his end was near; and from his beloved cell his soul winged its flight to heaven, A.D. 673. His shrine in Lichfield Cathedral was the scene of countless miracles till its desecration by the sacrilegious reformers. The Saint's body, however, was providentially saved by some devout Catholics, and it now reposes under the high altar of the cathedral of Birmingham.

DESIRE OF HEAVENLY GLORY.

Seven days before St. Chad's death, a brother in the monastery heard voices singing most sweetly. He listened, and noticed that the unseen choir seemed to rest over the cell of the holy bishop. St. Chad soon after this occurrence summoned the brethren together, and asked for their prayers, since in seven days he would depart. The mysterious chants, were he said, the voices of angels, who had come to call him to that heavenly reward which he had so long desired. On the seventh day the holy man died, and his soul was seen going up to heaven in the company of St. Cedd, his brother, and that of many angels.

'My son, when thou feellest that a desire of everlasting bliss is given unto thee, and thou covetest to go forth out of the tabernacle of thy mortal body, that so thou mayest without shadow behold my brightness, open thy heart, and with all the desires of thy soul embrace this holy inspiration.'—*Imitation.*

MARCH 3.

St. Gilbert, Abbot.

AFTER many years of study in England and France, Gilbert was ordained priest in 1123, and received from his father, who was lord of the manor, a rich benefice in Lincolnshire. Save a small sum for his own use, Gilbert gave his revenues to the poor, and by unwearying care brought his flock to a state of almost monastic discipline. After awhile he felt inspired to build a small house beside the church for seven maidens who wished to dedicate themselves to God. Others followed their example, and Gilbert soon found himself at the head of a rising community, which he thought at first of offering to the great Cistercian Order, then spreading in England. By the advice of St. Bernard, however, he instituted them as a separate body, and incorporated therewith a community of canons regular. Such was the origin of the Gilbertines, the only religious Order ever founded in England. Silence, meditation, and manual labor form the chief points of the rule, which was approved by Eugenius III. Gilbert's work now seemed complete, but his trials were yet to come. Some of his relaxed subjects shamefully slandered him to his bishop and to the Pope. Gilbert committed his cause to God, and waited patiently the result. At length his innocence was declared, and the privileges of his Order confirmed. Before his death he saw 700 canons and 1,500 nuns following the rule for which he had suffered so much.

A GOOD CONSCIENCE.

Just when Gilbert's character was definitely cleared and his Order established, another charge was brought against him. He was accused of sending alms to St. Thomas of Canterbury, then in exile. The charge, as it happened, was false; and the judge, who greatly revered Gilbert, offered to release him at once if he would but plead innocent. This, however, he firmly refused to do, preferring to risk both his own banishment and the destruction of his Order rather than by denying the charge to appear for one moment as the adversary of the Church's champion. At last, by the king's order, without having spoken one word in his own defence, he was set free.

'Thou art not more holy for being praised, nor worse for being blamed; what thou art, that thou art, nor canst thou be said to be greater than God seeth thee to be.'—*Imitation*.

MARCH 4.

St. Casimir, King.

CASIMIR, the second son of Casimir III., King of Poland, was born A.D. 1458. From the custody of a most virtuous mother, Elizabeth of Austria, he passed to the guardianship of a devoted master, the learned and pious John Dugloss. Thus animated from his earliest years by precept and example, his innocence and piety soon ripened into the practice of heroic virtue. At the age of twenty-five, sick of a lingering illness, he foretold the hour of his death, and chose to die a virgin rather than take the life and health which the doctors held out to him in the married state. In an atmosphere of luxury and magnificence the young prince had fasted, worn a hair shirt, slept upon the bare earth, prayed by night, and watched for the opening of the church doors at dawn. He had become so tenderly devoted to the Passion of our Lord, that at Mass he seemed quite rapt out of himself, and his charity to the poor and afflicted knew no bounds. His love for our Blessed Lady he expressed in a long and beautiful hymn, familiar to us in our own tongue. The miracles wrought by his body after death fill a volume. The blind saw, the lame walked, the sick were healed, a dead girl was raised to life. And once the Saint in glory led his countrymen to battle, and delivered them by a glorious victory from the schismatic Russian host.

DEVOTION TO MARY IMMACULATE.

Let the study of St. Casimir's life make us increase in devotion to the most pure Mother of God, a sure means of preserving holy purity.

One hundred and twenty-two years after his death the Saint's tomb in the cathedral of Vienna was opened, that the holy body might be transferred to the rich marble chapel where it now lies. The place was damp, and the very vault crumbled away in the hands of the workmen; yet the Saint's body, wrapt in robes of silk, was found whole and incorrupt, and emitted a sweet fragrance, which filled the church and refreshed all who were present. Under his head was found his hymn to our Lady, which he had had buried with him. The following night three young men saw a brilliant light issuing from the open tomb and streaming through the windows of the chapel.

MARCH 5.

St. John Joseph of the Cross.

WHILST but a schoolboy, John Joseph urged his companions to hate sin, sternly rebuked careless livers, and gave to the poor the better half of his meals. At the age of sixteen he had left Ischia, his birthplace, and received the habit of St. Francis at Naples, and three years later was sent by his superiors to erect a new house of the Alcantarines in Piedmont. In the hope of leading a solitary life he now retired to a hermitage at the foot of the Apennines; but his superiors soon summoned him thence, in 1678 he was made first novice-master, then superior, being at the time only twenty-four years of age. He was a man of strong feelings, a fond and devoted son, and all the affection of his nature was poured out on his brethren in religion. His faith, his austerities, and his prayers endowed his charity with miraculous efficacy. In times of famine he fed the friars with bread that multiplied, and herbs that grew at his command. No suffering seemed too trivial for his wonder-working sympathy; when a poor sick woman wished for peaches in the depth of winter they were found on a chestnut branch which the Saint had planted, and every ill of mind and body was in turn healed at his word. In 1702 his firmness and charity saved the very existence of his Order, which was imperilled by internal dissensions. He worked to his life's end, and died at the hour he had foretold in 1734.

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY.

The Saint was not content to relieve others of their cares and sorrows, but at times took them upon himself. A priest, in great suffering from two ulcers and with a painful operation in view, begged his prayers, whereupon St. John Joseph besought God to transfer the malady to himself. He was at once smitten with the sufferings of the sick man, who was at the same time freed from his disease. Again, a man plunged in vice made a general confession to the Saint, who, moved by his contrition, gave him only a light penance, binding himself to fulfil what still remained due for his crimes.

When begged to spare himself in works of mercy St. John Joseph answered, 'I have no infirmity to keep me from work; and if I had, ought I not to give my life in the same cause for which Jesus Christ died?'

MARCH 6.

St. Colette, Virgin.

AFTER a holy childhood, Colette joined a society of devout women called the Beguines; but not finding their state sufficiently austere, she entered the Third Order of St. Francis, and lived in a hut near her parish church of Corbie in Picardy. Here she had passed four years of extraordinary penance, when St. Francis, in a vision, bade her undertake the reform of her Order, then much relaxed. Armed with due authority she established her reform throughout a large part of Europe, and, in spite of the most violent opposition, founded seventeen convents of the strict observance. By the same wonderful prudence she assisted in healing the great schism which then afflicted the Church. The Fathers in Council at Constance were in doubt how to deal with the three claimants to the tiara—John XXIII., Benedict XIII., and Gregory XII. At this crisis Colette, together with St. Vincent Ferrer, wrote to the Fathers to depose Benedict XIII., who alone refused his consent to a new election. This was done, and Martin V. was elected, to the great good of the Church. Colette equally assisted the Council of Basle by her advice and prayers; and when, later, God revealed to her the spirit of revolt that was rising, she warned the bishops and legates to retire from the Council. She died March 6th, 1447, in a transport of intercession for sinners and the Church.

PRAYER FOR THE HOLY SEE.

St. Colette never ceased to pray for the Church, while the devils in turn never ceased to assault her. They swarmed round her as hideous insects, buzzing and stinging her tender skin. They brought into her cell the decaying corpse of public criminals, and assuming themselves monstrous forms struck her savage blows; or they would appear in the most seductive guise, and tempt her by many deceits to sin. Yet the virgin of Christ triumphed alike over their threats and allurements, and said she would count that day the unhappiest of her life in which she suffered nothing for her God.

One of the greatest tests of being a good Catholic is zeal for the Church and devotion to Christ's Vicar.

‘Peter, therefore, was kept in prison, but prayer was made without ceasing by the Church unto God for him.’—Acts xii. 5.

MARCH 7.

St. Thomas Aquinas.

ST. THOMAS was born of noble parents at Aquino in Italy, A.D. 1226. At the age of nineteen he received the Dominican habit at Naples, where he was studying. Seized by his brothers on his way to Paris, he suffered a two years' captivity in their castle of Rocca-Secca; but neither the caresses of his mother and sisters nor the threats and stratagems of his brothers could shake him in his vocation. Having at length escaped, he went to Cologne to study under B. Albert the Great, and after that to Paris, where he taught for many years philosophy and theology. The Church has ever venerated his numerous writings as a treasure-house of sacred doctrine; while in naming him the Angelic Doctor she has indicated that his science is more divine than human. The rarest gifts of intellect were combined in him with the tenderest piety. Prayer, he said, had taught him more than study. His singular devotion to the Blessed Sacrament shines forth in the Office and hymns for Corpus Christi, which he composed. To the words miraculously uttered by a crucifix at Naples, 'Well hast thou written concerning Me, Thomas; what shall I give thee as a reward?' he replied, 'Nought save Thyself, O Lord.' He died at Fossanuova, A.D. 1274, on his way to the General Council of Lyons, to which Pope Gregory X. had summoned him.

CHASTITY.

While St. Thomas was in confinement at Rocca-Secca, his brothers endeavored to entrap him into sin, but the attempt only ended in the triumph of his purity. Snatching from the hearth a burning brand, the Saint drove from his chamber the wretched creature whom they had there concealed. Then marking a cross upon the wall, he knelt down to pray, and forthwith, being rapt in ecstasy, an angel girded him with a cord, in token of the gift of perpetual chastity which God had given him. The pain caused by the girdle was so sharp that St. Thomas uttered a piercing cry, which brought his guards into the room. But he never told this grace to any one save only to Father Raynald, his confessor, a little while before his death. Hence originated the Confraternity of the 'Angelic Warfare,' for the preservation of the virtue of chastity.

The knowledge of God is for all, but hidden treasures are reserved for those who have ever followed the Lamb.

MARCH 8.

St. John of God.

NOTHING in John's early life foreshadowed his future sanctity. He ran away as a boy from his home in Portugal, tended sheep and cattle in Spain, and served as a soldier against the French, and afterwards against the Turks. When about forty years of age, feeling remorse for his wild life, he resolved to devote himself to the ransom of the Christian slaves in Africa, and went thither with the family of an exiled noble, which he maintained by his labor. On his return to Spain he sought to do good by selling holy pictures and books at low prices. At length the hour of grace struck. At Granada a sermon, by the celebrated John of Avila, shook his soul to its depths, and his expressions of self-aborrence were so extraordinary that he was taken to the asylum as one mad. There he employed himself in ministering to the sick. He had found his vocation. On leaving he began to collect homeless poor, and to support them by his work and by begging. By degrees help flowed in; the bishop became his patron, and gave him the name of John of God. When his hospital was on fire John was seen rushing about uninjured amidst the flames until he had rescued all his poor. After ten years spent in the service of the suffering, the Saint's life was fitly closed. He plunged into the river Xenil to save a drowning boy, and died A.D. 1550 of an illness brought on by the attempt, at the age of fifty-five.

REWARDS OF CHARITY.

One night St. John found in the streets a poor man who seemed near death, and, as was his wont, he carried him to the hospital, laid him on a bed, and went to fetch water to wash his feet. When he had washed them, he knelt to kiss them, and started with awe; the feet were pierced, and the print of the nails bright with an unearthly radiance. He raised his eyes to look, and heard the words: 'John, to Me thou doest all that thou doest to the poor in My name; I reach forth My hand for the almns thou givest; Me dost thou clothe; Mine are the feet thou dost wash.' And then the gracious vision disappeared, leaving St. John filled at once with confusion and consolation.

'When thou shalt pour out thy soul to the hungry, and shalt satisfy the afflicted soul, then shall thy light rise up in the darkness, and thy darkness shall be as the noonday.'—Isai. lviii. 10.

MARCH 9.

St. Frances of Rome.

FRANCES was born at Rome in 1384. Her parents were of high rank. They overruled her desire to become a nun, and at twelve years of age married her to Lorenzo Ponziano, a Roman noble. During the forty years of their married life they never had a disagreement. While spending her days in retirement and prayer, she attended promptly to every household duty, saying, 'A married woman must leave God at the altar to find Him in her domestic cares;' and she once found the verse of a psalm in which she had been four times thus interrupted completed for her in letters of gold. Her ordinary food was dry bread. Secretly she would exchange with beggars good food for their hard crusts; her drink was water, and her cup a human skull. During the invasion of Rome, in 1413, Ponziano was banished, his estates confiscated, his house destroyed, and his eldest son taken as a hostage. Frances saw in these losses only the finger of God, and blessed His holy name. When peace was restored Ponziano recovered his estates, and Frances founded the Oblates. After her husband's death, barefooted, and with a cord about her neck, she begged admission to the community, and was soon elected Superioress. She lived always in the presence of God, and amongst many visions was given the constant sight of her angel guardian. She died on the day she had foretold, March 9th, 1440.

REVERENCE FOR OUR GUARDIAN ANGEL.

St. Frances' angel appeared to her under the form of a lovely child about eight years of age; his eyes were fixed on heaven, his arms reverently crossed on his breast; he shed such a brightness around him that the Saint could read her midnight Office by this light alone. He shielded her in the hour of temptation, and directed her in every good act. But when she was betrayed into some defect, he faded from her sight; and when some light words were spoken before her, he covered his face in shame.

'Reverence thy guardian angel, nor dare do before him what thou wouldst not dare before me.'—*St. Bernard.*

'His angel hath been my keeper, both going hence and abiding there, and the Lord hath not suffered me, His handmaid, to be defiled.'—*Judith* xiii. 20.

MARCH 10.

The Forty Martyrs of Sebaste.

THE Forty Martyrs were soldiers quartered at Sebaste in Armenia, about the year 320. When the legion was ordered to offer sacrifice they separated themselves from the rest, and formed a company of martyrs. After they had been torn by scourges and iron hooks they were chained together, and led to a lingering death. It was a cruel winter, and they were condemned to lie naked on the icy surface of a pond in the open air till they were frozen to death. But they ran undismayed to the place of their combat, joyfully stripped off their garments, and with one voice besought God to keep their ranks unbroken. 'Forty,' they cried, 'we have come to combat; grant that forty may be crowned.' There were warm baths hard by, and a soldier stood on guard, ready at each moment to bring to the fire any one amongst them who would deny Christ. As he watched, he saw angels descending with thirty-nine crowns; and while he wondered at the deficiency in the number, one of the confessors lost heart, renounced his faith, and crawling to the fire died body and soul, at the spot where he expected relief. But the soldier on guard was inspired to confess Christ and take his place, and again the number of forty was complete. They remained steadfast while their limbs grew stiff and frozen, and died one by one, till the last of the forty entered heaven.

STRENGTH IN UNION.

Among the Forty there was a young soldier who held out longest against the cold, and when the officers came to cart away the dead bodies they found him still breathing. They were moved with pity, and wanted to leave him alive, in the hope that he would still change his mind. But his mother stood by, and this valiant woman could not bear to see her son separated from the band of martyrs. She exhorted him to persevere, and lifted his frozen body into the cart. He was just able to make a sign of recognition, and was borne away, to be thrown into the flames with the dead bodies of his brethren.

All who live the life of grace are one in Christ. But besides this there are many special ties—of religion, of community life, or at least of aspirations in prayers, and pious works. Thank God if He has bound you to others by these spiritual ties; remember the character you have to support, and pray that the bond which unites you may last for eternity.

MARCH 11.

St. Jane of Valois.

BORN of the blood royal of France, herself a queen, Jane of Valois led a life remarkable for its humiliations even in the annals of the Saints. Her father, Louis XI., who had hoped for a son to succeed him, banished Jane from his palace, and, it is said, even attempted her life. At the age of five the neglected child offered her whole heart to God, and yearned to do some special service in honor of His Blessed Mother. At the King's wish, though against her own inclination, she was married to the Duke of Orleans. Towards an indifferent and unworthy husband her conduct was ever most patient and dutiful. Her prayers and tears saved him from a traitor's death, and shortened the captivity which his rebellion had merited. Still nothing could win a heart which was already given to another. When her husband ascended the throne as Louis XII., his first act was to repudiate by false representations one who through twenty-two years of cruel neglect had been his true and loyal wife. At the final sentence of separation the saintly Queen exclaimed, 'God be praised, who has allowed this that I may serve Him better than I have heretofore done.' Retiring to Bourges, she there realized her long-formed desire, by founding the Order of the Annunciation in honor of the Mother of God. St. Jane died in heroic sanctity A.D. 1505, and was buried in the royal crown and purple, beneath which lay the habit of her Order.

DEVOUT RECITATION OF THE ANGELUS.

Under the guidance of St. Francis of Paula, the director of her childhood, St. Jane was enabled to overcome the serious obstacles which even good people raised against the foundation of her new Order. In 1501 the rule of the Annunciation was finally approved by Alexander VI. The chief aim of the Institute was to imitate the ten virtues practised by our Lady in the mystery of the Incarnation, the Superioress being called 'An-celle,' handmaid, in honor of Mary's humility. St. Jane built and endowed the first convent of the Order in 1502, where her body lay incorrupt till burned by the Calvinists in 1562.

'As nothing was made without the Word, so nothing was remade without Mary the Mother of the Word.'—*St. Damasus.*

MARCH 12.

St. Gregory the Great.

GREGORY was a Roman of noble birth, and while still young was Governor of Rome. But in this splendid position his heart was ill at ease; and on his father's death he gave his great wealth to the poor, turned his house on the Coelian Hill into a monastery which now bears his name, and for some years lived as a perfect monk. The Pope drew him from his seclusion to make him one of the seven deacons of Rome; and he did great service to the Church for many years as what we now call Nuncio to the imperial court at Constantinople. On the death of the Pope he was compelled to take the government of the Church, and for fourteen years his pontificate was a perfect model of ecclesiastical rule. Nothing escaped his wakeful eye; nothing was too great, nothing too small for his all-embracing care. He healed schisms, revived discipline; saved Italy by converting the wild Arian Lombards who were laying it waste; aided in the conversion of the Spanish and French Goths, who were also Arians; and kindled anew in Britain the light of the Faith which the English had put out in blood. He set in order the Church's prayers and chant, guided and consoled her pastors with innumerable letters, preached incessantly, most effectually by his own example. He died A.D. 604, worn out by austerities and toils; and the Church reckons him one of her four great doctors, and reveres him as St. Gregory the Great.

ZEAL FOR THE CONVERSION OF ENGLAND.

While still a monk the Saint was struck with some boys who were exposed for sale in Rome, and heard with sorrow that they were Pagans. 'And of what race are they?' he asked. 'They are Angles.' 'Worthy indeed to be angels of God,' said he; 'and of what province?' 'Of Deira,' was the reply. 'Truly must we rescue them from the wrath of God. And what is the name of their king?' 'He is called Ella.' 'It is well,' said Gregory; 'Alleluia must be sung in their land to God.' He at once got leave from the Pope, and had set out to convert our forefathers, when the murmurs of the people led the Pope to recall him. Still the Angles were not forgotten, and one of the Saint's first cares as Pope was to send from his own monastery St. Augustine and other monks to England.

'In very truth no sacrifice is so pleasing to God as zeal for souls.'—*St. Gregory.*

MARCH 13.

The Martyrs of Japan.

ABOUT forty years after St. Francis Xavier's death a persecution broke out in Japan, and all Christian rites were forbidden under pain of death. A confraternity of martyrs was at once formed, the object of which was to die for Christ. Even the little children joined it. Their constancy was soon tested. Christians were branded with the cross, or all but buried alive, while the head and arms were slowly sawn off with blunt weapons. The least shudder under their anguish was interpreted into apostasy. The obstinate were put to the most cruel deaths, but the survivors only envied them. Five noblemen were escorted to the stake by 40,000 Christians with flowers and lights, singing the Litanies of our Lady as they went. In the great martyrdom, at which thousands also assisted, the martyrs sent up a flood of melody from the fire, which only died away as one after another went to sing the new song in heaven. Later on a more awful doom was invented. The victims were lowered into a sulphurous chasm, called the 'mouth of hell,' near which no bird or beast could live. The chief of these, Paul Wiborg, whose family had been already massacred for the Faith, was thrice let down; thrice he cried with a loud voice, 'Eternal praise be to the ever-adorable Sacrament of the Altar.' The third time he went to his reward.

JOY IN SACRIFICE.

Peter, a Christian child six years old, was awakened early, and told that he was to be beheaded together with his father. Strong in grace he expressed his joy at the news, dressed himself in his gayest clothing, and took the hand of the soldier who was to lead him to death. The headless trunk of his father first met his view; calmly kneeling down he prayed beside the corpse, and, loosening his collar, presented his neck for the stroke. Moved by this touching scene the executioner threw down his sabre and fled. None but a brutal slave could be found for the murderous task; with unskilled and trembling hand he hacked the child to pieces, who at last died without uttering a single cry.

'O, how happy should I deem myself, to be permitted to be among these glorious prisoners of Jesus Christ, whose blessedness it is to die the martyr's death!'—*Letter of a Japanese Exile.*

MARCH 14.

St. Dorothy, Virgin, Martyr.

ST. DOROTHY was a young virgin celebrated at Cæsarea, where she lived, for her angelic virtue. Her parents seemed to have been martyred before her in the Diocletian persecution, and when the Governor Sapricius came to Cæsarea he called her before him, and sent this child of martyrs to the home where they were waiting for her.

She was stretched upon the rack, and offered marriage if she would consent to sacrifice, or death if she refused. But she replied, that 'Christ was her only spouse, and death her desire.' She was then placed in charge of two women who had fallen away from the Faith, in the hope that they might pervert her; but the fire of her own heart rekindled the flame in theirs, and led them back to Christ. When she was set once more on the rack, Sapricius himself was amazed at the heavenly look she wore, and asked her the cause of her joy. 'Because,' she said, 'I have brought back two souls to Christ, and because I shall soon be in heaven rejoicing with the angels.' Her joy grew as she was buffeted in the face, and her sides burnt with plates of red-hot iron. 'Blessed be Thou,' she cried, when she was sentenced to be beheaded,—'blessed be Thou, O Thou Lover of souls, who dost call me to Paradise, and invitest me to Thy nuptial chamber.'

HEAVENLY DESIRES.

St. Dorothy suffered in the dead of winter, and it is said that on the road to her passion a lawyer called Theophilus, who had been used to calumniate and persecute the Christians, asked her, in mockery, to send him 'apples or roses from the garden of her Spouse.' The Saint promised to grant his request, and just before she died, a little child stood by her side bearing three apples and three roses. She bade him take them to Theophilus, and tell him this was the present which he sought from the garden of her Spouse. St. Dorothy had gone to heaven, and Theophilus was still making merry over his challenge to the Saint, when the child entered his room. He saw that the child was an angel in disguise, and the fruit and flowers of no earthly growth. He was converted to the Faith, and then shared in the martyrdom of St. Dorothy.

'We cannot comprehend or understand, but we can desire and sigh.'—
St. Augustine.

MARCH 15.

V. Clement-Mary Hofbauer.

A VERITABLE Apostle, a true Saint, and a pillar of the Church. Thus spoke Pius VII. of the V. Clement-Mary. He was born in Moravia A.D. 1751, of poor parents, and was apprenticed by them to a baker; at the term of his engagement he left the world, and lived as a hermit till the persecuting laws of Joseph II. drove him from his cell. A call to the priesthood led him now to Vienna, but the same tyrant closed all the Church's seminaries, and Clement went to Rome. He there became a Redemptorist, and when ordained priest was sent to found his institute at Warsaw. After twenty-two years of apostolic labors he was expelled from Poland by the civil power, and his companions dispersed. Clement repaired to Vienna, and was appointed rector of the Ursuline church. In spite of the iniquitous restrictions of the State, which had robbed the Church of its due ceremonial, Clement carried out the functions in all their perfection, and restored the beauty of the house of God. By this means, and by his fervent preaching, he rekindled the devotion of the people, reformed the youth of the city, and converted numerous heretics. He was for the fourth time under orders to quit the country, when he caught a malignant fever, and died March 15th, 1820, before the sentence of exile could be carried out. His virtues were declared heroic by Pius IX. on May 14th, 1876.

BOLD DEFENCE OF THE FAITH.

When Hofbauer was studying at the University of Vienna, he one day heard a professor advance an opinion contrary to the teaching of the Church. The servant of God indignantly rose from his seat, and saying in a loud voice, 'Sir, what you have just said is not Catholic,' immediately left the hall. Years afterwards an aged priest came to him and asked him if he remembered the incident; it was the professor himself, who, though nettled by the frankness of the rebuke at the time, had afterwards entered into himself, and renouncing his error, led an edifying life as a prebendary of the cathedral.

The fearlessness with which the V. Hofbauer resolutely opposed all encroachments attempted upon the liberties and doctrines of the Church should make us courageous in witnessing to her authority and upholding her rights whenever we hear them impugned.

MARCH 16.

St. Julian, Martyr.

JULIAN was a cleric, born of a noble family in Cilicia, and arrested there during the persecution of the Church by Diocletian in the third century. He was scourged and branded, and his flesh torn till the bones appeared, but in vain. At last the judge fell on a device likely, as he thought, to wear out the patience of the Saint. For a whole year he led Julian from one place to another in the province of Cilicia, hoping to cover him with shame and confusion. But the effect was very different. All over the country the mere sight of Julian encouraged and sanctified the Christians. His patient suffering was a lesson better than any words he had ever spoken, his shame was a triumph in Jesus Christ, and he 'made manifest the odor of His knowledge in every place' (2 Cor. ii. 14).

Nothing was left except the sentence, and here the judge did what he could. He condemned the Saint to a death reserved by the law for parricides, and seldom executed even against them. He had him sewed up in a sack with vipers and scorpions, and then ordered him to be flung into the sea. But neither sack, nor vipers, nor sea could keep the martyr's soul from winging its flight to heaven, or destroy the cherished memory of his virtues among the Christians who had seen and known them.

GOOD EXAMPLE.

Christ shines in those who make an entire surrender of themselves, and He makes even their dead bodies the instruments of His grace. The judge flung the body of Julian into the sea, but the waves cast it up again and restored it to the Church. Diseases were cured at his shrine; persons possessed by the devil were brought there, and the devils left them, trembling. Many others obtained pardon of their sins and spiritual favors by visiting it. 'To this day,' says St. Chrysostom, 'we retain the body of the Saint, and find it a treasure of innumerable graces.'

'For we are the good odor of Christ unto God, in them that are saved and in them that perish. To the one indeed the odor of death unto death, but to the other the odor of life unto life.'—2 Cor. ii. 15, 16.

'The heavens declare God's glory, not because their voice is heard, but because the mere sight of them leads man to admire their Creator. So it is, only in a higher way, with the martyrs.'—*St. John Chrysostom.*

MARCH 17.

St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland.

TOWARDS the close of the fourth century, Patrick, a young Christian of Roman parentage, was tending sheep as a captive amidst the mountains of Antrim and Down. His time was wholly given to penance and prayer. The Psalms of David and the most beautiful hymns of the Church formed his daily petitions; while the gift of miracles marked his favor with God. At the age of twenty-two he was set free, and, warned by a voice from heaven, dedicated himself to the conversion of the Irish race. After twenty years of training in the school of St. Martin at Tours, he obtained full powers from Pope St. Celestine, was consecrated bishop, and sailed for the Irish coast. The great result of his sixty years' preaching is known throughout the world. He found Ireland heathen, and left it Christian. He encountered the Druids at Tara, and abolished their pagan rites. He converted the warrior chiefs and princes, and baptised them, with thousands of their subjects, in the holy wells, which still bear that name. Many youths and maidens embraced the religious state, and schools, convents, and churches rose simultaneously throughout the land. In the midst of this wonderful success St. Patrick's life was what it had always been, one of penance and prayer, his humility increasing as he drew near his end. Full of works and full of years the great missionary died at Sabhull, in the county of Down. A.D. 492.

ZEAL FOR THE FAITH.

Ireland is the nursery whence Patrick sent forth his missionaries and teachers. Glastonbury and Lindisfarne, Ripon and Malmesbury, bear testimony to the labors of Irish priests and bishops for the conversion of England. Iona is to this day the most venerated spot in Scotland. Columban, Fiacre, Gall, and many others evangelized the 'rough places' of France and Switzerland. America and Australia, in modern times, owe the Christianity to the faith and zeal of the sons and daughters of St. Patrick.

By the instrumentality of St. Patrick the Faith is now as fresh in Ireland, even in this cold nineteenth century, as when it was first planted. Ask him to obtain for you the special grace of his children, to prefer the loss of every earthly good to the least compromise in matters of faith.

MARCH 18.

BB. Paul, John, and James, MM.

TAICOSAMA, the Emperor of Japan, suspecting that the Franciscan Fathers, who came to him as ambassadors of Portugal, were preparing the way for Portuguese conquest, ordered them to be put to death. A happy error made three Japanese of the Society of Jesus sharers in their crown. Paul Miki was thirty-three years old, and though not yet a priest was one of the most successful preachers of the Christian faith. John, a youth of nineteen, and James, an old man of sixty-four, were catechists and novice lay-brothers in the Jesuit house at Meaco. With the other twenty-three martyrs, their left ear was mutilated, and they were placed on carts, as a moving pillory, and paraded through the country. At last they sailed for Nagasaki, where, on a long-backed hill over the city, twenty-six crosses were reared; a dense crowd was gathered all around. On the way up John and James took their vows of religion. John's father was awaiting him, but only to encourage him to die. Then he took his stand beneath his son, and saw the double lance-thrust, which dyed him with the blood of his child. Paul preached from his cross to those beneath him, and encouraged his fellow martyrs with burning words. The venerable old brother James rejected the signs of honor he received from the crowd, saying, 'I am but a sinner.' With the words, 'Jesus and Mary,' he received his death-stroke.

GRATITUDE FOR SPECIAL GRACES.

The Christians of Meaco, knowing that the edict of the Emperor did not include the Jesuits, tried in vain to bribe the officials to let the three go. Paul Miki wrote at once to them, 'Is that your way of showing your love to me? What, did you wish to deprive me of the immense favor which God has given me? You ought instead to rejoice, and to praise His infinite goodness for it.'

Japan was full of zealous missionaries, all anxious to give their life for Him whose name they bore. The bishops and priests and learned were passed over. God took two simple lay-brothers and an unordained student.

'He who would keep the grace of God, let him be grateful for grace when it is given, and patient when it is taken away. Let him pray that it may be given back to him, and be careful and humble lest he lose it.'

—*Imitation.*

MARCH 19.

St. Joseph.

ST. JOSEPH was by birth of the royal family of David, but was living in humble obscurity as a carpenter, when God raised him to the highest sanctity, and fitted him to be the spouse of His Virgin-Mother, and foster father and guardian of the Incarnate Word. Joseph, says the Holy Scripture, was a just man; he was innocent and pure, as became the husband of Mary; he was gentle and tender, as one worthy to be named the father of Jesus; he was prudent and a lover of silence, as became the master of the holy house; above all, he was faithful and obedient to Divine calls. His conversation was with angels rather than with men. When he learnt that Mary bore within her womb the Lord of Heaven, he feared to take her as his wife; but an angel bade him fear not, and all doubts vanished. When Herod sought the life of the Divine infant, an angel told Joseph in a dream to fly with the Child and His Mother into Egypt. Joseph at once arose, and obeyed. When the danger was past, a third time the angel spoke; and at his bidding the faithful Joseph returned to the peace of Nazareth. Here for long years he lived, uniting with his domestic care and daily toil the continued contemplation of heavenly things until his work was done; and the greatest of God's Saints breathed his last breath in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

SANCTIFICATION OF HOME.

The brightest homes must have their cross, and the love of father and mother be strengthened by afflictions from the hand of God. As Mary became in a special sense our Mother at the foot of the Cross, bringing forth children in sorrow, so with Joseph. The three days' loss was to him a renewal and consecration of his paternity. The Holy Ghost had infused into his soul the instincts and feelings of a father, and in his sorrows and regrets for that loss they were perfected. At this moment Mary could dare to give her spouse the name of father, and say to her Son at the finding in the temple, 'Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing.'

St. Joseph, the shadow of the Eternal Father upon earth, the protector of Jesus in his home at Nazareth, and a lover of all children for the sake of the Holy Child, should be the chosen guardian and pattern of every true Christian family.

MARCH 20.

St. Cuthbert, Bishop.

ST. CUTHBERT, the memory of whose holy life and heavenly favors after death drew so many of our ancestors to pray around his sacred and incorrupt body at Durham, was born A.D. 637. As a child he was foremost in every boyish game; but being warned of his call to higher matters, he put away childish things, and found new and sweeter happiness in prayer. One night, when he was fifteen, he had a vision of angels bearing to heaven the soul of St. Aidan, which so inflamed him that, at once leaving all, he became a postulant at the abbey of Melrose. After thirty-four years of fervent religious life, nine of which were spent in eremitical solitude, he was, much against his own will, made Bishop of Lindisfarne. He now gave full scope to that love of souls which his long retreat had fostered, emerging from it, like his Divine Master from the desert, to spend and be spent in their behalf. As he went about doing good, and proclaiming with many a miracle the power of the Gospel, his sunny cheerfulness and loving sympathy attracted all men, while the peacefulness of his soul and his hatred of all schism won them to find their rest in God and His Holy Church. In two short years, feeling death approaching, he betook himself to his former solitude, where he sweetly slept in Christ, A.D. 687.

PEACE THROUGH THE FAITH.

Some of the Northumbrian Christians were so wedded to a particular observance as to the time of Easter, that when their local custom was reformed by the Holy See they refused to submit. St. Cuthbert was horrified at this spirit of insubordination, and his dying words were directed against it. 'Have no communion,' said he, 'with those who err from Catholic unity. I would rather that you took my bones from the tomb, to reside wherever God may direct you, than that you should consent in any way to the wickedness of schismatics.'

In all temptations against faith say to the devil, 'O wretch, thou hast left the Church of the Angels, and thou wouldst that I should leave that of the Saints: begone, Satan; I will not dispute to please you. I adhere to Holy Church, and never will forsake her.'—*St. Francis of Sales.*

'Being justified therefore by faith, let us have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.'—Rom. v. 1.

MARCH 21.

St. Benedict, Abbot.

ST. BENEDICT, blessed by grace and in name, was born of a noble Italian family about 480. When a boy he was sent to Rome, and there placed in the public schools. Scared by the licentiousness of the Roman youth, he fled to the desert mountains of Subiaco, and was directed by the Holy Spirit into a cave, deep, craggy, and almost inaccessible. He lived there for three years, unknown to any one save the holy monk Romans, who clothed him with the monastic habit and brought him food. But the fame of his sanctity soon gathered disciples round him, while many parents confided their children to his care. Amongst others trained by him were St. Maurus, then twelve years old, and St. Placid, also a child. After he had built twelve monasteries at Subiaco, he removed to Monte Cassino, where he founded an abbey, in which he wrote his rule, and lived until death. By prayer he did all things: wrought miracles, saw visions, and prophesied. By prayer he mended the broken sieve, brought water from the rock, replenished the empty barrel of oil, gave alms, cast out evil spirits, and beheld the whole world collected together in one ray of the sun. Six days before his death he ordered his grave to be opened, and fell ill of a fever. On the sixth day he requested to be borne into the chapel, and having received the Body and Blood of Christ, with hands uplifted, and leaning on one of his disciples, he calmly expired in prayer on the 21st March 543.

THE POWER OF PRAYER.

A peasant, whose boy had just died, ran in anguish to St. Benedict, crying out, 'Give me back my son!' The monks joined the poor man in his entreaties; but the Saint replied, 'Such miracles are not for us to work, but for the blessed Apostles. Why will you lay upon me a burden which my weakness cannot bear?' Moved at length by compassion he knelt down, and prostrating himself upon the body of the child, prayed earnestly. Then rising, he cried out, 'Behold not, O Lord, my sins, but the faith of this man, who desireth the life of his son, and restore to the body that soul which thou hast taken away.' Hardly had he spoken when the child's body began to tremble, and taking it by the hand he restored it alive to its father.

'Whatsoever good thing thou beginnest to do, first of all beg of God with earnest prayer to perfect it unto the end.'—*St. Benedict.*

MARCH 22.

St. Apollonia and the Martyrs of Alexandria.

AT Alexandria in 249 the mob rose in savage fury against the Christians. Metras, an old man, perished first. His eyes were pierced with reeds, and he was stoned to death. A woman named Quinta was the next victim. She was led to a heathen temple and bidden worship. She replied by cursing the false god again and again, and she too was stoned to death. After this the houses of the Christians were sacked and plundered. They took the spoiling of their goods with all joy.

St. Apollonia, an aged virgin, was the most famous among the martyrs. Her teeth were beaten out; she was led outside the city; a huge fire was kindled, and she was told that she must deny Christ, or else be burnt alive. She was silent for a while, and then, moved by a special inspiration of the Holy Ghost, she leapt into the fire and died in its flames. The same courage showed itself the next year, when Decius became Emperor, and the persecution grew till it seemed as if the very elect must fall away. There were indeed many Christians who came pale and trembling to offer the heathen sacrifices. But the judges themselves were struck with horror at the multitudes who rushed to martyrdom. Women triumphed over torture, till at last the judges were glad to execute them at once, and put an end to the ignominy of their own defeat.

DESIRE OF MARTYRDOM.

The story of Dioscorus illustrates the courage of the Alexandrian Christians, and the esteem they had for martyrdom. He was a boy of fifteen. To the arguments of the judge he returned wise answers: he was proof against torture. His older companions were executed, but Dioscorus was spared on account of his tender years; yet the Christians could not bear to think that he had been deprived of the martyr's crown except to receive it afterwards more gloriously. 'Dioscorus,' writes Dionysius, Bishop of Alexandria at this time, 'remains with us, reserved for some longer and greater combat.'

'On us sinners also, trusting in the multitude of Thy mercies, bestow some part and share with Thy holy Apostles and martyrs.'—*Canon of the Mass.*

'For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel shall save it.'—Mark viii. 35

MARCH 23.

St. Turibius, Bishop.

BORN of a noble Spanish family. Turibius was advanced by Philip II. to the high judicial post of President of Granada. This office he discharged for five years with such prudence and virtue, that when the archbishopric of Lima fell vacant he was adjudged to be of all others the best qualified to evangelize Peru, and remedy the scandals which obstructed the conversion of the infidels. Obedience and zeal for souls overcame his repugnance to the dignity, and in 1581, he sailed for his distant diocese. His jurisdiction extended along a coast-line of four hundred miles, embracing populous cities and rough mountain districts. The native population was infamous for its debauchery; the Spaniards for their cruelty, avarice, and fraud. Turibius, on his arrival, began a visitation of the whole country, which occupied him seven years; he traveled, often on foot, over the snows of the Andes and the scorching sands of the coast to the most remote villages; churches, seminaries, hospitals, sprang up in his steps. Even on his journeys he said Mass and confessed daily, though he had never lost his baptismal innocence. He organized and reformed the diocese of Peru, establishing synods, and using his authority to correct abuses among clergy and laity alike. He was especially zealous in behalf of the Indians, and protected them from the tyranny of their conquerors. He died March 23d, 1606.

SYMPATHY WITH THE AFFLICTED.

When St. Turibius received the news of his appointment to the episcopate he cast himself on the ground, and prayed, with many tears, that God would deliver him from so heavy a burden; it was not till the miserable condition of the native Indians was represented to him that he agreed to accept the office, in order to help them in their troubles. Then only at the call of charity did he consent to take upon himself the unwelcome honor. His sacrifice was awarded by a most blessed death. He ordered psalms of praise to be sung round him as he lay in his agony, and with a calm and holy joy gave back his soul to God.

No heart has such a keen sympathy with the afflicted as the Sacred Heart of Jesus; in proportion as our hearts are united to His this sympathy will increase in them.

MARCH 24.

St. Clare of Rimini.

CLARE was the daughter of wealthy and noble parents; she herself was twice married, and her life, up to her conversion, was spent in the enjoyment of the riches and pleasures of the world. As she prayed in the Franciscan church at Rimini our Lady appeared surrounded by angels and Saints. 'Of what avail,' she said, 'to your first husband, whom you loved so well, were his honors, his fortune, and his youth, since death has taken him from you and from them?' In a moment Clare saw the folly of her life, and her resolve was taken. The hair-shirt, the sharp discipline,—these were to be hers for the future. A small cell, a board to sleep on, bread and herbs to eat,—for these she was to exchange the comforts and refinements of the world. To these austerities she added an active zeal for good works; she served a community of Poor Clares as a lay-sister; she would run messages for the poorest; she offered herself as a slave to ransom a criminal in the common prison of the town. But as her life drew to a close she inclined more and more to contemplation. With the companions whom her example had gathered round her she founded a convent of Beguines, and there waited for her release. In a vision of the Passion she heard the words, 'Arise, My beloved; haste and come.' The end was not far off. She died February 10th, 1326.

PENANCE FOR VENIAL SIN.

In the beginning of her conversion St. Clare was often tempted to return to the softness of her old life; but she resisted every impulse of this kind, however harmless in itself, by constant ejaculatory prayer and self-imposed penance. One day, having been tempted to some slight act of self-indulgence in eating, she searched with much trouble for a disgusting insect, and having found one placed it in her mouth, saying, 'Eat, glutton; eat, then, this dainty dish.' From that hour she never suffered another temptation with regard to food or drink.

We know nothing more of St. Clare than that she lived in the world as the world lives. How few of us are not conscious of sins more grievous! And yet compare our penance with hers.

'Can any sin be called light, since every sin involves some contempt of God?'—*St. Eucherius.*

MARCH 25.

St. Irenæus of Sirmium.

IRENÆUS was still young when he was made Bishop of Sirmium. But we know that his virtues fitted him for this high office, and in his death he proved himself detached from all save the service of God, a minister who had no need to be ashamed. When brought before the President of Pannonia, during the persecution of Diocletian, he refused to offer sacrifice, and to the threat of torments he replied, 'I will bear them with joy, that I may partake in the Passion of the Lord.' But another trial awaited him after his torture. His friends and his relations surrounded him, bewailing his youth, and beseeching him to take pity on himself. To all this Irenæus paid no heed. He was hastening on to the prize of his heavenly calling: neither the tears of his friends nor imprisonment and fresh torture could impede him in his course or cool the fervor of his desire to die for Christ.

He hurried on his executioners, and bade the judge pass sentence at once, and see how Christ would make His servant victorious over death. As he reached the bridge where he was to be beheaded he stripped off his clothes, raised his hands to heaven, and prayed Christ to receive His servant, who suffered for His name and for the people of the Catholic Church.

DETACHMENT.

The judge asked St. Irenæus if he had any relations. 'None,' he replied. 'Who, then,' said the judge, 'were those who stood weeping at your trial?' The holy martyr explained his meaning. 'Our Lord Jesus Christ,' he said, 'has given us this rule—"He who loves father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me."' And so, in the words of the Acts, looking up to God, and fixing his mind on His promise, he despised everything else, and declared that none was present with him except God.

Christians are bound to love their relations, but it must be in God and for God, and when our duty to Him is in question we have no right to condescend to flesh and blood. Our Lord has taught us in the Gospel the perfect detachment He requires from His disciples. When He called He expected them to follow. He forbade one of them to go and bury his father, another to bid his family farewell. Perfection is impossible without detachment.

MARCH 26.

B. Alexis Falconieri.

ON the Feast of the Assumption, 1233, seven Florentine nobles met together, as their custom was, to recite the Office of the Blessed Virgin. While they were thus engaged she herself appeared before them, and bade them forsake the world for a more perfect life. At once, like the Christians of old, they sold their goods, gave the money to the poor, and changed their senatorial robes for the simple habit of religious. 'See, the servants of the Madonna,' cried a child at its mothers' breast as they entered the city: the name was accepted as a token of the will of Heaven, and from that time they and their spiritual children have been known as Servites, or servants of Mary. One of these seven founders was Alexis Falconieri, the propagator of the devotion to the Seven Dolours of our Lady. He was with difficulty prevailed upon to receive ordination, and in religion always sought out the most humbling offices. To him our Lady presented the black habit which the Servites wear in honor of the Passion of her Son. Every day of his life Alexis repeated a hundred Hail Mariets to the immaculate Mother of God; and it was at the end of the hundredth 'Ave' that he expired, on February 17th, 1310, in his 110th year. At the moment of his death he saw a flock of doves flying round him, and the Infant Jesus placing a crown of flowers upon his head.

DEVOTION TO THE SEVEN DOLOURS OF OUR BLESSED LADY.

At the time of the foundation of the Servite Order several counterfeit religious bodies were troubling the Church. Innocent IV. therefore commissioned St. Peter Martyr, the Dominican, to investigate its true character. Our Lady herself undertook the defence of her clients. She appeared to the Inquisitor in a vision of glory with a wreath of seven lilies upon her head. These lilies, she explained to Peter, signified the seven founders of the Servites, whom she had inspired to institute the new Order in honor of the dolours she had suffered through the Passion of her Son.

'O, make me truly weep with thee,
Mourning with Him who died for me;
Let me in grief expire.'—*Stabat Mater*.

'And Simeon said to Mary, A sword shall pierce thy own soul also, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.'—Luke ii. 35.

. MARCH 27.

St. John of Egypt.

TILL he was twenty-five John worked as a carpenter with his father. Then feeling a call from God he left the world, and committed himself to a holy solitary in the desert. His master tried his spirit by many unreasonable commands, bidding him roll the hard rocks, tend dead trees, and the like. John obeyed in all things with the simplicity of a child. After careful training of sixteen years he withdrew to the top of a steep cliff to think only of God and his soul. There he dwelt fifty years till his death, never quitting his cell, eating a little fruit once a day, and never seeing a woman. St. Augustine tells us of his appearing in a vision to a holy woman whose sight he had restored, to avoid seeing her face to face. Devils assailed him continually, but John never ceased his prayer. From his long communings with God he turned to men with gifts of healing and prophecy. Twice each week he spoke through a window with those who came to him, blessing oil for their sick, and predicting things to come. A deacon came to him in disguise, and he reverently kissed his hand. To the Emperor Theodosius he foretold his future victories and the time of his death. The three last days of his life John gave wholly to God: on the third he was found on his knees as if in prayer, but his soul was with the blessed. He died A.D. 394.

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE.

St. John left first his natural and then his spiritual brethren, and gave himself up to prayer, to learn the state of his conscience, that he might purify himself, as God is pure. The more he knew of himself, the more he distrusted himself. For the last fifty years therefore he never saw women, and seldom men. The result of this vigilance and purity was threefold: a holy joy and cheerfulness which consoled all who conversed with him; perfect obedience to superiors; and in return for this, authority over creatures, whom he had forsaken for the Creator.

The Saints examine themselves by the perfections of God, and do penance. We judge our conduct by the standard of other men, and rest satisfied with it. Yet it is by the divine holiness alone that we shall be judged when we die.

‘Be ye holy, because I am holy. For I am the Lord your God.’—Leviticus xi. 44.

MARCH 28.

St. Dositheus, Monk

DOSITHEUS was brought up in luxury, and attained high rank in the imperial army, in the sixth century. He had never been taught any religion. At Jerusalem he saw a picture of hell, and whilst wondering what it could mean a bright figure appeared and explained it. Friends, seeing his life changed, said in joke, 'If you wish to live thus you should enter a monastery.' He asked what a monastery was, and some one took him to that of St. Seridon. This Saint seeing him in rich military uniform told St. Dorotheus to question him on various points; but his only answer was, 'I want to save my soul.' Dorotheus then told him he was too delicate to reach sanctity by penance, but must perfect himself by interior mortification. Dositheus devoted himself with ardor to this study, and became a model of unhesitating obedience. He thus fulfilled in five short years the measure of his sanctification, and God sent him a painful and lingering disease which led him to paradise. On his death bed Dositheus said to St. Barsanuphius, 'Bid me die, my father; I can bear no more.' The Saint answered, 'Yet a little patience, my son; the hour of God's mercy draws nigh.' Afterwards Dositheus said, 'My father, I can live no longer.' And Barsanuphius said, 'Go in peace, my son, to appear before the Adorable Trinity, and pray for us.' And Dositheus by obedience slept in the Lord.

REWARDS OF OBEDIENCE.

After the death of Dositheus his fellow monks murmured among themselves, saying, 'Dositheus fasted but little; he did no great penance. Why does our father Barsanuphius ask his prayers, as though he were already a Saint in heaven?' But a holy solitary arrived, who asked God to show him the merits of the former religious of that monastery. He saw them all in vision, and with the venerable aged monks a young novice, equal to them in glory. From his description the monks recognized Dositheus, and learned that a short life of heroic obedience is equal before God to many years of austere but self-chosen penance.

'The example of blessed Dositheus shows what progress we make by renouncing our own will. In the world he had lived in luxury, but by renouncing his own judgment and embracing perfect obedience, this man who had never heard the name of God, attained with great rapidity to eminent sanctity.'—*St. Dorotheus.*

MARCH 29.

St. Montanus and Companions, MM.

SOON after the death of St. Cyprian, about the middle of the third century, eight Christians fell into the hands of the persecutors at Carthage. In a letter still extant they tell us that they used the time of their imprisonment to fit themselves for heaven by communion in prayer and charity, and found their loathsome dungeon a paradise of delight. Charity was ever on their lips and in their actions. Flavian, one of their number, practised it in such an heroic degree that, when they were all suffering from hunger, he used to save a portion of his scanty pittance that there might be more for the rest. But this charity shone brightest in the hour of death. Two of their number died in prison. The rest were led out to be beheaded, except Flavian, who was spared for the time, and remained full of grief at this separation. But his brethren did not forget him. Just before his head was struck off, Montanus, one among them, prayed aloud that Flavian might join them in three days; then he tore in two the bandage for his eyes, and left one half for him. In three days Flavian was beheaded. He blessed the Christians who stood by, if they kept the unity of the Church and the bond of charity. Then he bound his eyes with the other half of the bandage which Montanus had bequeathed to him, and knelt for the stroke of the sword.

BROTHERLY LOVE.

We can see from the history of these martyrs how entirely their perseverance hung upon the exact observance of charity. One of them had some difference with another on a matter of prudence. In a vision he seemed to stand in the white-robed army of the martyrs; but when he looked at himself he was stained with the black mark of his fault. He awoke, and was reconciled with his brother.

Love our brethren is the great means of growing in the love of God. Supernatural charity is not easy. It costs many a sacrifice, but it is worth them all. It is the way to peace, the way to gain great graces, which will enable us to conquer our temptations, and to do great things for God. Martyrdom is the crowning act of the love of God, and the martyr's crown was given, as the Acts of the martyrs testify, to those who had been fervent disciples in the school of charity.

MARCH 30.

St. John Climacus.

JOHN made, while still young, such progress in learning that he was called the Scholastic. At the age of sixteen he turned from the brilliant future which lay before him, and retired to Mt. Sinai, where he put himself under the direction of a holy monk. Never was novice more fervent, more unrelaxing in his efforts for self-mastery. After four years he took the vows, and an aged abbot foretold that he would some day be one of the greatest lights of the Church. Nineteen years later, on the death of his director, he withdrew into a deeper solitude, where he studied the lives and writings of the Saints, and was raised to an unusual height of contemplation. The fame of his holiness and practical wisdom drew crowds around him for advice and consolation. For his greater profit he visited the solitudes of Egypt. At the age of seventy-five he was chosen abbot of Mt. Sinai, and there 'he dwelt in the mount of God, and drew from the rich treasure of his heart priceless riches of doctrine, which he poured forth with wondrous abundance and benediction.' He was induced by a brother abbot to write the rules by which he had guided his life; and his book, called the *Climax, or Ladder of Perfection*, has been prized in all ages for its wisdom, its clearness, and its unction. At the end of four years he would no longer endure the honors and distractions of his office, and retired to his solitude, where he died A.D. 605.

CONTINUOUS PROGRESS.

'Amongst these men,' St. John writes of the solitaries of the desert, 'I saw many whose heads were white with age, whose faces were as those of angels, who by their fervor of spirit and converse with God had attained a simplicity of wisdom and a perfect innocence which had nothing in common with the decay of reason and the second childishness we often see in old men of the world. Outwardly they were marked by an exceeding gentleness, a cordial and seemly gaiety of heart; nothing studied, nothing put on; inwardly their whole soul was turned towards God. as simple and innocent children turn to a loving father.'

'Aim at being as absolute in thine own heart as is a king in his kingdom; and be thou as much raised above thyself by the sovereignty of thy reason over thy passions as thou art cast down beneath God by a humble and perfect subjection to His supreme power.—*St. John Climacus.*

MARCH 31.

B. Nicholas of Flüe.

NICHOLAS, called of Flue from his native village in the Swiss canton of Unterwalden, was born in 1417. His childhood was marked by a zeal for prayer and penance. Returning late from the fields he would turn to some solitary place to be alone with God; and he fasted rigorously, in spite of his parents' fears, four days a week. At the age of thirty he married, and brought up in singular holiness a family of ten children. In this new state his hunger after prayer did but increase; not content with the day, he would steal out at midnight to pray in a neighboring church till dawn. As a brave soldier in more than one war, and as counsellor and judge in his own canton, he ever gave the same wonderful example of holiness. When fifty years old, following the urgent call of God, he left home and family, and retired to the mountains above Flue. Here God enabled him to lead an extraordinary life, praying constantly and tasting no food save the Blessed Sacrament. Examined by superiors, and tried by the touchstone of obedience, his sanctity and the gift of miracles and prophecy drew to him all who needed strength, counsel, or consolation. He received Holy Viaticum kneeling in spite of extreme pain, and surrounded in his little cabin by the wife and children whom he had left for God, and whom he consoled and strengthened to the last, died in 1487, after twenty years of hermit life.

THE SANCTIFICATION OF OUR STATE.

When Nicholas was serving in the war against Austria, the Swiss had resolved to set fire to a dominican convent, which the enemy had strongly fortified. Filled with holy zeal, Nicholas implored the commander to desist, prophesying, as indeed it came to pass, that the enemy would withdraw of their own accord, and that the convent would give a glorious example of virtue in after time. Having prevailed with the chiefs he flew to the spot, and at the risk of his life snatched the brands from the soldiers' hands and put out the rising flames. Thus if we have God's glory at heart we may find in every state opportunities of promoting it.

As a young man working in the fields, as father of a family, as a soldier, and as a magistrate, B. Nicholas teaches us that it is possible in the world, not only to save our souls, but to reach a high degree of prayer and union with God.

THE ANNUNCIATION.

The Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated on March 25, is one of the most ancient festivals in the Church, honoring at the same time our divine Lord and His Blessed Mother. It commemorates the happy moment when the angel announced to Mary that she was to become the Mother of the Son of God, and also the part which this most pure Virgin bore in the Redemption. On this day we should pray the Blessed Mother to obtain for us true contrition, and a fervent love for her divine Son, who on this day conferred on her the honor of being His Mother. Mary, then, is to be venerated above all the saints in heaven; she it was who elevated the dignity of her sex, and liberated it from the oppression under which it languished during the prevalence of the Jewish religion. The mystery commemorated upon this holy day is recalled to us three times during the day by the "Angelus bell." The beautiful and appropriate devotion known as the "Angelus" was introduced by Pope John XXII., and reminds the Christian that even amid his temporal affairs he must not forget what a Saviour's love has done for him. The clear, silvery chimes of the bell seem to say: "Behold, O Christian what the love of a God has done for a sinful world! Do then something in return. Offer Him at least all the trials and crosses of to-day!" *

*The Sovereign Pontiff, Benedict XIII., by a brief, Sept. 14, 1724, granted:

A PLENARY INDULGENCE, once a month, to all the faithful who, every day, at the sound of the bell, in the morning, or at noon, or in the evening at sunset, shall say devoutly on their knees, the *Angelus Domini*, with the *Hail Mary* three times, on any day when, being truly penitent, after confession and communion they shall pray for peace and union among Christian princes, for the extirpation of heresy, and for the triumph of holy Mother Church.

AN INDULGENCE OF ONE HUNDRED DAYS, on all the other days in the year, every time that, with at least contrite heart and devotion, they shall say these prayers; and he, moreover declared that these indulgences, both plenary and partial, are not suspended in the Holy Year.

The Sovereign Pontiff, Benedict XIII., confirmed these indulgences, April 20 1742, declaring at the same time, that these prayers should be said standing on Saturday evening and on Sunday.

The Sovereign Pontiff, Pius VI., by a rescript of the S. Congr. of the Propaganda, March, 18, 1781, granted that in those places where no bell is rung at the times stated above, the faithful may gain the indulgences if, at or about the hours specified, they say, with at least contrite heart and devotion, the *Angelus*, or the *Regina Cæli* in the paschal season.

THE OLD MAN'S ANGELUS.*

BY ATTIE O'BRIEN.

An old man sits by the cottage door;
The winds are hushed on the sunlit hills;
He tells his rosary softly o'er,
Till sudden music the silence thrills—
A holy sound which he loves full well,
The clangor sweet of the Angelus Bell.

Raising to heaven his sightless eyes,
He lifts the hat from his long, white hair;
He cannot gaze on the blue bright skies,
But a radiant world to him seems there,
From which the bell's melodious chime
Breaks on the echoing shores of time.

When first it sung from the old church tower
The wondrous words which an angel spoke,
It touched his heart with a mystic power—
His soul to a wider life awoke;
It grew, like a friendly voice, more dear,
Through the saddening lapse of each changing year.

How warm were the hours when life was young!
His heart by a tender tone was thrilled;
Swift fell the words from the eager tongue,
The earth with a strange new joy was filled.
But the Angelus chiming seemed to say:
"Ah, youth and its love-dreams pass away."

Solemn and sweet in the sun-flushed morn,
It woke strong thoughts for the day's long toil;
It fell when the heat of day was borne,
A rain from heaven on parched soil.
It checked at even the weary sigh,
And gently whispered that rest was nigh.

He sinned—it snoted on his shrinking ears,
Like the wak'ning angel's trump of doom;
He grieves—in its silver tone he hears
Celestial promise of joy to come,
In God's great city, where sin nor pain
Shall ever shadow his heart again.

Pallid and worn, on his bed he lies,
Calm 'neath the angel of death's bright wings;
"There's light," he said, "will the sun soon rise?
Maybe I'd sleep when the Angelus rings."

* An old Irishman car-driver of the late Charles Bianconi had a great devotion to the Angelus. By, at least, a curious coincidence, he lately died while the Angelus Bell was ringing.

When the bells rang in the bright'ning
day,
The soul of the old man passed away.

ST. JOSEPH.

St. Joseph's day, which falls on the 19th of March, has been observed in the Eastern Church since the ninth century, but in the Western for only two hundred years. It reminds us of the part which this great saint took in the work of Redemption, for, as the foster-father of Jesus, as the PROTECTOR OF THE HOLY FAMILY, after the Blessed Virgin, his was the most glorious part in the work of salvation. He is therefore next to Mary, the most powerful intercessor at the throne of God. This great saint is especially venerated as the PATRON OF THE DYING, because he was found worthy to die in the arms of Jesus and Mary. He has been declared by Pope Pius IX., the PATRON OF THE WHOLE CHURCH. Let us honor him with tender love and devotion, that he may aid us to keep ever in our hearts the great thought of salvation, and that we may be blessed with a happy death. In the first centuries this feast was not observed, because at that time only the festivals of martyrs were commemorated. It may also be that this omission arose from the fear of producing some false impression in the minds of the uneducated: such as the idea that St. Joseph was the real father of Jesus.

ST. JOSEPH, OUR FATHER.

O Father of my Lord! most near and dear
To those whom I would fain hold nearest,
dearest,
My love is growing all too bold, I fear,
So kind and fatherly the face thou wearest.
Yet, great St. Joseph! let me, let me call
thee
Father, and in a father rights instal thee.
For thou wast Father unto Him who said,
And bade us say unto the Same, *Our
Father!*
And e'en as one, whose hour of life is sped,
Will his loved kindred round his pillow
gather;
So did thy Son, our Elder Brother, measure
His failing breath to leave to us his treasure.
He from his dying couch (a hard one!) spake
To John and us: "Behold, behold your
Mother!"
Nay, like thy namesake, when we guilty
quake,

"Fear not," He whispers, "am not I your
Brother?"

Thus, Joseph, art thou father to our Brother,
O spouse of Mary! husband of our Mother!
Saint, envied most of all the saints in heaven,
Highest (save One) of all beneath divine,
To thee, in sooth, most blessed lot was
given—

What heaven has best, on earth was wholly
thine.

Thy head was laid on Jesus' breast when
dying.

And Mary hung above thee, mutely sighing.

Ah! by the sadness of that happy hour,
Haste to my aid when my last hour is
come;

Patron of Death! prove then thy sovereign
power—

Bring me to her—to Him—oh! bring me
home.

Thy smile and hers will soothe my soul's mis-
giving,

When He, thy foster-child, shall judge the
dead and living.

M. RUSSELL, S. J.

SONNET TO ST. JOSEPH.

Saints know thee best, oh, hidden, silent
saint!

And would that I could feel a little part
Of that great love Theresa's kindred heart
Felt for thee, Foster-father! But the taint,
The chill, is on my soul; and few and faint
The prayers that from this earthly bosom
dart

Up to that heavenly throne whereon thou
art

In glory, not too high to hear my plaint.

Patron of all who work in humble ways!

Pray that from pure earnest motive I
May fill with patient toil the moments
flying;

Patron of happy death-beds! when my days
Have reached their term, be thou, dear
Joseph! nigh,

With Mary and with Jesus, while I'm
dying.

THE JOYS AND SORROWS OF ST.
JOSEPH.

Mighty Joseph, son of David!
High and glorious is thy state—

Of our Lord the Foster-father,
Mary's spouse immaculate.

The Almighty's faithful servant,
Of the Holy Family

Head and father. Oh! I pray thee,
Be a father unto me.

AN EARNEST WORD.

To the Reverend Clergy, the Religious Orders, and the Catholic Parents of America :

In one of the most touching public addresses of our late glorious Pope, Pius IX., lamenting the evils of our day, declared that while he could have borne his own sorrows with courage, "*his heart bled* when he saw the little ones of the flock of Jesus Christ destroyed by the ravening wolves of human society."

Children of your charge, for whom you have assumed responsibility, are perhaps among those for whom the heart of the Vicar of Christ bled. Our children, at least too many of them, are perishing from the terrible poison of bad reading of all kinds. You are spending your lives in the holy work of Catholic education, and scarcely have you completed your work when much of it, if not all, is undone by bad books and papers.

"What is it that the children of this land are reading, and with what ill-effects?" Everything that they should not, and hardly anything that is good and pure. Some time since the Government officers seized in one establishment four tons of such obscene books that even the Post-Office refused to circulate them—and the official stomach is very strong, and its conscience very easy, as to what constitutes obscenity. In his report for 1877 the Government Agent says: "In no year had there been so many complaints from seminaries, colleges, etc., of the distribution of obscene publications. *Some of the boys' papers published in this city (New York) are a blot on civilization. Their effect on lads was pernicious, and it would be difficult to make many of these publications more low, disgusting, and nefarious.*" No wonder that the heart of Pro Nono bled, and that he blessed those who aid in circulating antidotes to this vileness.

See what Father Damen, S. J., says on this subject in his "MISSIONARY'S WARNING" (sent free from THE CATHOLIC REVIEW Office, New York, for a stamp for postage).

Catholic teachers and Catholic parents, why allow all your sacrifices to be undone? Undone they will be, if, after teaching your boys and girls how to read, you do not create in them a love for pure books.

It is true that you have established school and parochial libraries, and have sought, with more or less success, to create a taste for Catholic reading. What more could you have done? Perhaps, in the past, not much more; in the future still more is possible. Besides the parochial library, there ought to be in every Catholic home the *family library*.

"But this is not possible. Books there are in abundance on the Catholic booksellers' shelves, but who can afford to pay *their prices*?" And, again, another says: "Yes, our boys and girls would read Catholic books, and their fathers would willingly buy them, but *how is a Catholic father to give his day's work for a book which is read in a single evening*?" It is hard to ask it. The Devil surely is doing his work on business principles, and makes his poison the plenteist, the cheapest, and the worst.

"We beg of you to have pity on these little ones, for whose fate the heart of Pro Nono and of every Catholic Priest and Nun in this land has bled. We beg of you to give us cheap and good Catholic books." From a thousand schools, five thousand churches, and a million homes this prayer has gone up every hour for a whole generation.

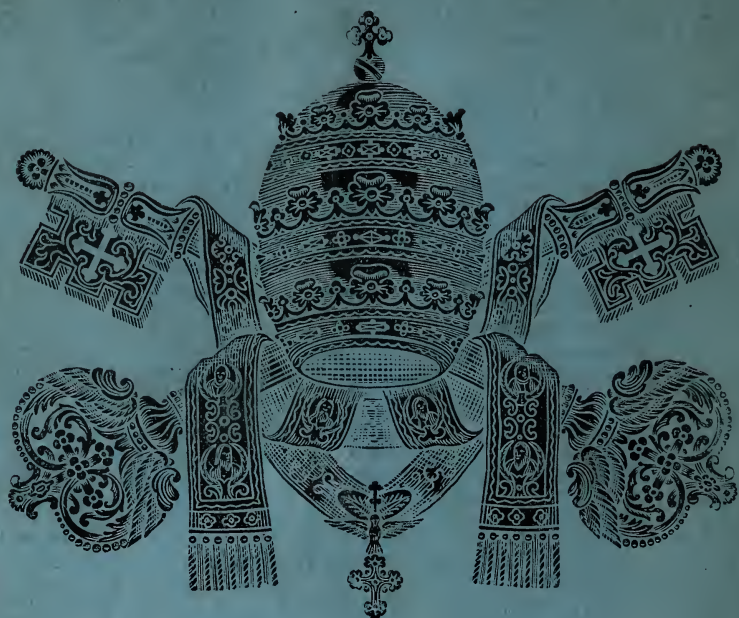
It was the business of some Catholics to hear this complaint repeated every day of the week, and at last their duty to examine how could it be answered. "THE VATICAN LIBRARY of Cheap, Recreative, and Instructive Catholic Literature" was the solution of the problem after three years of study, waiting for opportunities and for capital to attempt it.

Catholic teacher, Catholic parent, see whether THE VATICAN LIBRARY offers you any assistance in your work; whether it will enable you to create and sustain a taste for Catholic reading; whether it will enable Catholic families to have in their own homes a little Catholic library of their own.

If it does, your aid is asked for it—your liberal, active, continuous aid.

The projectors cannot sustain this work unaided by the Catholic public, therefore the co-operation of all sections of the community is needed.

You are requested, therefore, to aid in your section in procuring an immense sale of these books. Without such a sale they cannot be profitable, and without some profit there is no hope of developing this good work as its well-wishers hope



EVERY reader of THE HOLY FAMILY can obtain specimens of the handsome Catholic pictorial and story paper *The Illustrated Catholic American*, by sending name, address, and ten cents, to No. 11 Barclay Street, New York.