

# LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

January 1.

The Feast of the Circumcision of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- S. GASPAR, *one of the Magi.*  
S. CONCORD, *P. M., at Spoleto, in Umbria, circ. A.D. 175.*  
SS. ELVAN, *B., and MYDWYN, in England, circ. A.D. 198.*  
S. MARTINA, *V. M., at Rome, A.D. 235.*  
S. PARACODIUS, *B. of Fienne, A.D. 239.*  
S. SEVERUS, *M., at Ravenna, A.D. 304.*  
S. TELEMACUS, *M., at Rome, A.D. 397.*  
S. FULGENTIUS, *B. C. of Ruspe, in N. Africa, A.D. 533.*  
S. MOCHUA, *OF CUAN, Ab. in Ireland, 6th Cent.*  
S. MOCHUA, *OF CRONAN, Ab. of Balla, in Ireland, 6th Cent.*  
S. EUGENDUS, *Ab. of Condate, in the Jura, A.D. 581.*  
S. FANCHEA, *OF FAIN, V. Abs., of Rosairthir, in Ireland, 6th Cent.*  
S. CLARE, *Ab. of Fienne, circ. A.D. 660.*  
S. WILLIAM, *Ab. S. Benignus, at Dijon, A.D. 1031.*  
S. ODILO, *Ab. Cluny, A.D. 1049.*

## THE CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD.



THIS festival is celebrated by the Church in order to commemorate the obedience of our Lord in fulfilling all righteousness, which is one branch of the meritorious cause of our redemption, and by that means abrogating the severe injunctions of the Mosaic law, and placing us under the grace of the Gospel.

God gave to Abraham the command to circumcise all male children on the eighth day after birth, and this rite was to be the seal of covenant with Him, a token that, through shedding of the blood of One to come, remission of the original sin inherited from Adam could alone be obtained.

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It was also to point out that the Jews were cut off, and separate, from the other nations. By circumcision a Jew belonged to the covenant, was consecrated to the service of God, and undertook to believe the truths revealed by Him to His elect people, and to hold the commandments to which He required obedience. Thus this outward sign admitted him to true worship of God, true knowledge of God, and true obedience to God's moral law. Circumcision looked forward to Christ, who, by His blood, remits sin. Consequently as a rite pointing to Him who was to come, it is abolished, and its place is taken by baptism, which also is a sign of covenant with God, admitting to true worship, true knowledge, and true obedience. But baptism is more than a covenant, and therefore more than was circumcision. It is a sacrament, that is, a channel of grace. By baptism, supernatural power, or grace, is given to the child, whereby it obtains that which by nature it could not have. Circumcision admitted to covenant, but conferred no grace. Baptism admits to covenant and confers grace. By circumcision a child was made a member of God's own peculiar people. By baptism the same is done, but God's own people is now not one nation, but the whole Catholic Church. Christ underwent circumcision, not because He had inherited the sin of Adam, but because He came to fulfil all righteousness, to accomplish the law, and for the letter to give the spirit.

It was, probably, the extravagancies committed among the heathen at the Kalends of January, upon which this day fell, that hindered the Church for some ages from proposing it as an universal set festival. The writings of the Fathers are full of invectives against the idolatrous profanations of this day, which concluded the riotous feasts in honour of Saturn, and was dedicated to Janus and Strena, or Strenua, a goddess supposed to preside over those presents which were sent to

and received from, one another on the first day of the year, and which were called after her, *strenæ*; a name which is still preserved in the *étrennes* or gifts, which it is customary in France to make on New Year's Day.

But, when the danger of the heathen abuses was removed by the establishment of Christianity in the Roman Empire, this festival began to be observed; and the mystery of our Blessed Lord's Circumcision is explained in several ancient homilies of the fifth century. It was, however, spoken of in earlier times, as the Octave of the Nativity, and the earliest mention of it as the Circumcision is towards the end of the eleventh century, shortly before the time of S. Bernard, who also has a sermon upon it. In the Ambrosian Missal, used at Milan, the services of the day contain special cautions against idolatry. In a Gallican Lectionary, which is supposed to be as old as the seventh century, are special lessons "In Circumcisione Domini." Ivo, of Chartres, in 1090, speaks of the observance of this day in the French Church. The Greek Church also has a special commemoration of the Circumcision.



### S. CONCORD, P. M.

(ABOUT 175.)

[S. Concord is mentioned in all the Latin Martyrologies. His festival is celebrated at Bispal, in the diocese of Gerona, in Spain, where his body is said to be preserved, on the 2d January. His translation is commemorated on the 4th July. The following is an abridgment of his genuine Acts.]

In the reign of the Emperor Marcus Antoninus, there raged a violent persecution in the city of Rome. At that time there dwelt in Rome a subdeacon named Concordius, whose father was priest of S. Pastor's, Cordianus by name. Concord was brought up by his father in the fear of God, and in

the study of Holy Scripture, and he was consecrated sub-deacon by S. Pius, Bishop of Rome. Concord and his father fasted and prayed, and served the Lord instantly in the person of His poor. When the persecution waxed sore, said Concord to his father, "My lord, send me away, I pray thee, to S. Eutyches, that I may dwell with him a few days until this tyranny be overpast." His father answered, "My son, it is better to stay here that we may be crowned." But Concord said, "Let me go that I may be crowned where Christ shall bid me be crowned." Then his father sent him away, and Eutyches received him with great joy. With him Concord dwelt for a season, fervent in prayer. And many sick came to them, and were healed in the name of Jesus Christ.

Then, hearing the fame of them, Torquatus, governor of Umbria, residing at Spoleto, sent and had Concord brought before him. To him he said, "What is thy name?" He answered, "I am a Christian." Then said the Governor, "I asked concerning thee, and not about thy Christ." S. Concord replied, "I have said that I am a Christian, and Christ I confess." The Governor ordered: "Sacrifice to the immortal gods, and I will be to thee a father, and will obtain for thee favour at the hands of the Emperor, and he will exalt thee to be priest of the gods." S. Concord said, "Harken unto me and sacrifice to the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt escape eternal misery." Then the Governor ordered him to be beaten with clubs and to be cast into prison.

Then, at night, there came to him the blessed Eutyches, with S. Anthymius, the bishop; for Anthymius was a friend of the Governor; and he obtained permission of Torquatus to take Concord home with him for a few days. And during these days he ordained him priest, and they watched together in prayer.

And after a time, the Governor sent and brought him



before him once more and said to him, "What has thou decided on, for thy salvation?" Then Concord said, "Christ is my salvation, to whom daily I offer the sacrifice of praise." Then he was condemned to be hung upon the little horse, and with a glad countenance he cried, "Glory be to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ!"

After this torment he was cast into prison; with irons on his hands and neck. And blessed Concord began to sing praise to God in his dungeon, and he said, "Glory be to God on high, and in earth peace to men of good will." Then, that same night, the angel of the Lord stood by him and said, "Fear not to play the man, I shall be with thee."

And when three days had passed, the Governor sent two of his officers at night to him with a small image of Jupiter. And they said, "Hear what the Governor has ordered, sacrifice to Jupiter or lose thy head." Then the blessed Concord spat in the face of the idol, and said, "Glory be to Thee, Lord Jesus Christ." Then one of the officers smote off his head in the prison. Afterwards two clerks and certain religious men carried away his body and buried it not far from the city of Spoleto, where many waters flow forth.



## SS. ELVAN AND MYDWYN.

(ABOUT 198.)

[Mentioned in English Martyrologies, and by Ferrarius in his General Catalogue of the Saints. The evidence for these Saints is purely traditional; the first written record of them was by Gildas, A.D. 560, but his account is lost. It is referred to by Matthew of Westminster.]

**SAINT ELVAN**, of Avalon, or Glastonbury, was brought up in that school erroneously said to have been founded by S. Joseph of Arimathea. He vehemently preached the truth before Lucius, a British king, and was mightily assisted by

S. Mydwyn of Wales (Meduinus), a man of great learning. Lucius despatched Elvan and Mydwyn to Rome, on an embassy to Pope Eleutherius, in 179, who consecrated Elvan bishop, and appointed Mydwyn teacher. He gave them as companions, two Roman clerks, Faganus and Deruvianus, or according to some, Fugatius and Damianus. They returned with these to King Lucius, who was obedient to the word of God, and received baptism along with many of his princes and nobles. Elvan became the second archbishop of London. He and Mydwyn were buried at Avalon. S. Patrick is said to have found there an ancient account of the acts of the Apostles, and of Fugatius and Damianus, written by the hand of S. Mydwyn. Matthew of Westminster gives the following account of the conversion of Lucius, under the year 185 :—“About the same time, Lucius, king of the Britons, directed letters to Eleutherius, entreating him that he would make him a Christian. And the blessed pontiff, having ascertained the devotion of the King, sent to him some religious teachers, namely, Faganus and Deruvianus, to convert the King to Christ, and wash him in the holy font. And when that had been done, then the different nations ran to baptism, following the example of the King, so that in a short time there were no infidels found in the island.”

There is a considerable amount of exaggeration in this account of Matthew of Westminster which must not be passed over. Lucius is known in the Welsh Triads by the name of Lleurwg or Lleufer Mawr, which means “The great Luminary,” and this has been Latinized into Lucius, from *Lux*, light. He was king of a portion of South Wales only. The Welsh authorities make no mention of the alleged mission to Rome, though, that such a mission should have been sent is extremely probable. Some accounts say that Medwyn and Elfan were Britons, and that Dyfan and

Ffagan (Deruvianus and Faganus) were Roman priests. But both these names are British, consequently we may conjecture that they were of British origin, but resided then at Rome.

Four churches near Llandaf bore the names of Lleurwg (Lucius), Dyfan, Ffagan, and Medwy, which confirms the belief in the existence of these saints and indicates the scene of their labours. Matthew of Westminster adds:—"A.D. 185. The blessed priests, Faganus and Deruvianus, returned to Rome, and easily prevailed on the most blessed Pope that all that they had done should be confirmed. And when it had been, then the before-mentioned teachers returned to Britain, with a great many more, by whose teaching the nation of the Britons was soon founded in the faith of Christ, and became eminent as a Christian people. And their names and actions are found in the book that Gildas the historian wrote, concerning the victory of Aurelius Ambrosius."

Geoffrey, of Monmouth, who, unsupported, is thoroughly untrustworthy, mentions the same circumstance, on the authority of the treatise of Gildas, now lost. The embassy to Rome shall be spoken of at length, under the title of S. Lucius, December 11th. See also Nennius, § 22; Bede's Eccles. Hist. i. 4; and the Liber Landavensis, p. 65.



### S. TELEMACHUS, H. M.

(ABOUT 391.)

THE following account of the martyrdom of S. Telemachus is given by Theodoret, in his Ecclesiastical History, Book v., chap. 26:—"Honorius, who had received the empire of Europe, abolished the ancient exhibitions of gladiators in Rome on the following occasion:—A certain man, named Telemachus, who had embraced a monastic life, came from the east to Rome at a time when these cruel

spectacles were being exhibited. After gazing upon the combat from the amphitheatre, he descended into the arena, and tried to separate the gladiators. The bloodthirsty spectators, possessed by the devil, who delights in the shedding of blood, were irritated at the interruption of their savage sports, and stoned him who had occasioned the cessation. On being apprised of this circumstance, the admirable Emperor numbered him with the victorious martyrs, and abolished these iniquitous spectacles."

For centuries the wholesale murders of the gladiatorial shows had lasted through the Roman empire. Human beings in the prime of youth and health, captives or slaves, condemned malefactors, and even free-born men, who hired themselves out to death, had been trained to destroy each other in the amphitheatre for the amusement, not merely of the Roman mob, but of the Roman ladies. Thousands, sometimes in a single day, had been

"Butchered to make a Roman holiday."

The training of gladiators had become a science. By their weapons and their armour, and their modes of fighting, they had been distinguished into regular classes, of which the antiquaries count up full eighteen: *Andabatae*, who wore helmets without any opening for the eyes, so that they were obliged to fight blindfold, and thus excited the mirth of the spectators; *Hoplomachi*, who fought in a complete suit of armour; *Mirmillones*, who had the image of a fish upon their helmets, and fought in armour with a short sword, matched usually against the *Retiarii*, who fought without armour, and whose weapons were a casting-net and a trident. These and other species of fighters, were drilled and fed in "families" by *lanistae*, or regular trainers, who let them out to persons wishing to exhibit a show. Women, even high-born ladies, had been seized in former times with



the madness of fighting, and, as shameless as cruel, had gone down into the arena, to delight with their own wounds and their own gore the eyes of the Roman people.

And these things were done, and done too often under the auspices of the gods, and at their most sacred festivals. So deliberate and organized a system of wholesale butchery has never perhaps existed on this earth before or since, not even in the worship of those Mexican gods whose idols Cortez and his soldiers found fed with human hearts, and the walls of their temples crusted with human gore. Gradually the spirit of the Gospel had been triumphing over this abomination. Ever since the time of Tertullian, in the second century, Christian preachers and writers had lifted up their voice in the name of humanity. Towards the end of the third century, the emperors themselves had so far yielded to the voice of reason, as to forbid by edicts the gladiatorial fights. But the public opinion of the mob in most of the great cities had been too strong both for saints and for emperors. S. Augustine himself tells us of the horrible joy which he, in his youth, had seen come over the vast ring of flushed faces at these horrid sights. The weak Emperor Honorius bethought himself of celebrating once more the heathen festival of the Secular Games, and formally to allow therein an exhibition of gladiators. But in the midst of that show sprang down into the arena of the Colosseum of Rome this monk Telemachus, some said from Nitria, some from Phrygia, and with his own hands parted the combatants in the name of Christ and God. The mob, baulked for a moment of their pleasure, sprang on him, and stoned him to death. But the crime was followed by a sudden revulsion of feeling. By an edict of the Emperor the gladiatorial sports were forbidden for ever; and the Colosseum, thenceforth useless, crumbled slowly away into that vast ruin which remains unto this day, purified, as men well said,

from the blood of tens of thousands, by the blood of one true and noble martyr.<sup>1</sup>

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S. FULGENTIUS, B. C.

(B. 468 ; D. 533.)

[Mentioned in all the Latin Martyrologies. His life was written by one of his disciples, and addressed to his successor, Felicianus. Many of his writings are extant.]

FULGENTIUS belonged to an honourable senatorial family of Carthage, which had, however, lost its position with the invasion of the Vandals into Northern Africa. His father, Claudius, who had been unjustly deprived of his house in Carthage to give it to the Arian priest, retired to an estate belonging to him at Telepte, a city of the province of Byzacene. And here, about thirty years after the barbarians had dismembered Africa from the Roman empire, in the year 468, was born Fulgentius. Shortly after this his father died, and the education of the child devolved wholly on his mother, Mariana. It has been often observed that great men have had great mothers. Mariana was a woman of singular intelligence and piety. She carefully taught her son to speak Greek with ease and good accent, and made him learn by heart Homer, Menander, and other famous poets of antiquity. At the same time she did not neglect his religious education, and the youth grew up obedient and modest. She early committed to him the government of the house and servants and estate, and his prudence in these matters made his reputation early, and he was appointed procurator of the province.

But it was not long before he grew weary of the world ; and the love of God drew him on into other paths. He

<sup>1</sup> *The Hermits*, by Rev. C. Kingsley, p. 153, 154.

found great delight in religious reading, and gave more time to prayer. He was in the habit of frequenting monasteries, and he much wondered to see in the monks no signs of weariness; though they were deprived of all the relaxations and pleasures which the world provides. Then, under the excuse that his labours of office required that he should take occasional repose, he retired at intervals from business, and devoted himself to prayer and meditation, and reduced the abundance of food with which he was served. At length, moved by a sermon of S. Augustine on the thirty-sixth Psalm, he resolved on embracing the religious life.

There was at that time a certain bishop, Faustus by name, who had been driven, together with other orthodox bishops, from their sees, by Huneric, the Arian king. Faustus had erected a monastery in Byzacene. To him Fulgentius betook himself, and asked to be admitted into the monastery. But the bishop repelled him saying, "Why, my son, dost thou seek to deceive the servants of God? Then wilt thou be a monk when thou hast learned to despise luxurious food and sumptuous array. Live as a layman less delicately, and then I shall believe in thy vocation." But the young man caught the hand of him who urged him to depart, and kissing it said, "He who gave the desire, is mighty to enable me to fulfil it. Suffer me to tread in thy footsteps, my father!" Then with much hesitation Faustus suffered the youth to remain, saying, "Perhaps my fears are unfounded. Thou must be proved some days."

The news that Fulgentius had become a monk spread far and wide. His mother, in transports of grief, ran to the monastery, crying out, "Faustus! restore to me my son, and to the people their governor. The Church always protects widows; why then dost thou rob me, a desolate widow, of my child?" Faustus in vain endeavoured to calm her. She desired to see her son, but he refused to give permis-

sion. Fulgentius, from within, could hear his mother's cries. This was to him a severe temptation, for he loved her dearly.

Shortly after, he made over his estate to his mother, to be discretionally disposed of, by her, in favour of his brother Claudius, when he should arrive at a proper age. He practised severe mortification of his appetite, totally abstaining from oil and everything savoury, and his fasting produced a severe illness, from which, however, he recovered, and his constitution adapted itself to his life of abstinence.

Persecution again breaking out, Faustus was obliged to leave his monastery, and Fulgentius, at his advice, took refuge in another, which was governed by the Abbot Felix, who had been his friend in the world, and who became now his brother in religion. Felix rejoiced to see his friend once more, and he insisted on exalting him to be abbot along with himself. Fulgentius long refused, but in vain; and the monks were ruled by these two abbots living in holy charity, Felix attending to the discipline and the bodily necessities of the brethren, Fulgentius instructing them in the divine love. Thus they divided the authority between them for six years, and no contradictions took place between them; each being always ready to comply with the will of the other.

In the year 499, the country being ravaged by the Numidians, the two abbots were obliged to fly to Sicca Veneria, a city of the proconsular province of Africa. Here they were seized by orders of an Arian priest and commanded to be scourged. Felix, seeing the executioners seize first on Fulgentius, exclaimed, "Spare my brother who is not sufficiently strong to endure your blows, lest he die under them, and strike me instead." Felix having been scourged, Fulgentius was next beaten. His pupil says, "Blessed Fulgentius, a man of delicate body, and



of noble birth, was scarce able to endure the pain of the repeated blows, and, as he afterwards told us, hoping to soothe the violence of the priest or distract it awhile that he might recover himself a little, he cried out, 'I will say something if I am permitted.'" The priest ordered the blows to cease, expecting to hear a recantation. But Fulgentius, with much eloquence, began a narration of his travels; and after the priest had listened awhile, finding this was all he was about to hear, he commanded the executioners to continue their beating of Fulgentius. After that the two abbots, naked and bruised, were driven away. Before being brought before the Arian priest, Felix had thrown away a few coins he possessed, and his captors not observing this, after they were released, he and Fulgentius returned to the spot and recovered them all again. The Arian bishop, whose relations were acquainted with the family of Fulgentius, was much annoyed at this proceeding of the priest, and severely reprimanded him. He also urged Fulgentius to bring an action against him, but the confessor declined, partly because a Christian should never seek revenge, partly also because he was unwilling to plead before a bishop who denied the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. Fulgentius resolving to visit the deserts of Egypt, renowned for the sanctity of the solitaries who dwelt there, went on board a ship for Alexandria, but the vessel touching at Sicily, S. Eulalius, abbot at Syracuse, diverted him from his intention, assuring him that "a perfidious dissention had severed this country from the communion of S. Peter. All these monks, whose marvellous abstinence is noised abroad, have not got with you the Sacrament of the Altar in common;" meaning that Egypt was full of heretics. Fulgentius visited Rome in the latter part of the year 500, during the entry of Theodoric. "Oh," said he, "how beautiful must the Heavenly Jerusalem be, if earthly Rome be so glorious." A

short time after, Fulgentius returned home, and built himself a cell on the sea-shore, where he spent his time in prayer, reading and writing, and in making mats and umbrellas of palm leaves.

At this time the Vandal heretic, King Thrasimund, having forbidden the consecration of Catholic bishops, many sees were destitute of pastors, and the faithful were reduced to great distress. Faustus, the bishop, had ordained Fulgentius priest, on his return to Byzacene, and now, many places demanded him as their bishop. Fulgentius, fearing this responsibility, hid himself; but in a time of such trial and difficulty the Lord had need of him, and He called him to shepherd His flock in a marvellous manner. There was a city named Ruspe, then destitute of a bishop, for an influential deacon therein, named Felix, whose brother was a friend of the procurator, desired the office for himself. But the people, disapproving his ambition, made choice unanimously of Fulgentius, of whom they knew only by report; and upon the primate Victor, bishop of Carthage, giving his consent that the neighbouring bishops should consecrate him, several people of Ruspe betook themselves to the cell of Fulgentius, and by force compelled him to consent to be ordained. Thus he might say, in the words of the prophet, "A people whom I have not known shall serve me."

The deacon Felix, taking advantage of the illegality of the proceeding, determined to oppose the entrance of S. Fulgentius by force, and occupied the road by which he presumed the bishop would enter Ruspe. By some means the people went out to meet him another way, and brought him into the Cathedral, where he was installed, whilst the deacon Felix was still awaiting his arrival in the road. Then he celebrated the Divine mysteries with great solemnity, and communicated all the people. And when Felix, the deacon, heard this, he was abashed, and refrained from further

opposition. Fulgentius received him with great sweetness and charity, and afterwards ordained him priest.

As bishop, S. Fulgentius lived like a monk ; he fed on the coarsest food, and dressed himself in the plainest garb, not wearing the orarium which it was customary for bishops to put upon them. He would not wear a cloak (*casula*) of gay colour, but one very plain, and beneath it a blackish or milk-coloured habit (*pallium*) girded about him. Whatever might be the weather, in the monastery he wore this habit alone, and when he slept, he never loosed his girdle. "In the tunic in which he slept, in that did he sacrifice ; he may be said, in time of sacrifice, to have changed his heart rather than his habit."<sup>1</sup>

His great love for a recluse life induced him to build a monastery near his house at Ruspe, which he designed to place under the direction of his old friend, the Abbot Felix. But before the building could be completed, King Thrasimund ordered the banishment of the Catholic bishops to Sardinia. Accordingly S. Fulgentius and other prelates, sixty in all, were carried into exile, and during their banishment they were provided yearly with provisions and money by the liberality of Symmachus, bishop of Rome. A letter of this Pope to them is still extant, in which he encourages them and comforts them. S. Fulgentius, during his retirement, composed several treatises for the confirmation of the faith of the orthodox in Africa. King Thrasimund, desirous of seeing him, sent for him and appointed him lodgings in

<sup>1</sup> This passage has been quoted by some to show that at this period special vestments were not in general use for the Eucharist, as an argument against their present use. But it must be remembered that what was immaterial at a time when the Sacrifice of the Mass and the Real Presence were universally believed, is material at a time when both these verities are disputed. Moreover, it by no means appears from the passage quoted, that Fulgentius did not wear Eucharistic vestments. It simply says that he wore the habit he lived and slept in, then. This is what Monks and Friars do now, they put the vestment over the habit ; that this is what is meant by the writer, I doubt not.

Carthage. The king drew up a set of ten objections to the Catholic faith, and required Fulgentius to answer them. The Saint immediately complied with his request, and his answer had such effect, that the king, when he sent him new objections, ordered that the answers should be read to himself alone. He then addressed to Thrasimund a confutation of Arianism, which we have under the title of "Three Books to King Thrasimund." The prince was pleased with the work, and granted him permission to reside at Carthage; till upon repeated complaints from the Arian bishops of the success of his preaching, which threatened, they said, the total conversion of the city to the faith in the Consubstantial, he was sent back to Sardinia, in 520. He was sent on board one stormy night, that he might be taken away without the knowledge of the people, but the wind being contrary, the vessel was driven into port again in the morning, and the news having spread that the bishop was about to be taken from them, the people crowded to say farewell, and he was enabled to go to a Church, celebrate, and communicate all the faithful. Being ready to go on board when the wind shifted, he said to a Catholic whom he saw weeping, "Grieve not, I shall shortly return, and the true faith of Christ will flourish again in this realm, with full liberty to profess it; but divulge not this secret to any."

The event confirmed the truth of the prediction. Thrasimund died in 523, and was succeeded by Hilderic, who gave orders for the restoration of the orthodox bishops to their sees, and that liberty of worship should be accorded to the Catholics.

The ship which brought back the bishops to Carthage was received with great demonstrations of joy. The pupil of the bishop and eye-witness of the scene thus describes it:—"Such was the devotion of the Carthaginian citizens, desiring to see the blessed Fulgentius again, that all the people



ardently looked for him whom they had seen wrestle so manfully before them. The multitude which stood upon the shore was silent in expectation as the other bishops disembarked before him, seeking with eyes and thoughts only him whom they had familiarly known, and eagerly expecting him from the ship. And when his face appeared, there broke forth a huge clamour, all striving who should first salute him, who should first bow his head to him giving the benediction, who should deserve to touch the tips of his fingers as he walked, who might even catch a glimpse of him, standing afar off. From every tongue resounded the praise of God. Then the people going before and following after the procession of the blessed confessors moved to the Church of S. Agileus. But there was such a throng of people, especially around Fulgentius, whom they especially honoured, that a ring had to be formed about him by the holy precaution of the Christians, to allow him to advance upon his way. Moreover the Lord, desiring to prove the charity of the faithful, marvellously poured upon them, as they moved, a heavy shower of rain. But the heavy down-pour deterred none of them, but seemed to be the abundant benediction of Heaven descending on them, and it so increased their faith, that they spread their cloaks above blessed Fulgentius, and composed of their great love a new sort of tabernacle over him. And the evening approaching, the company of prelates presented themselves before Boniface, the bishop (of Carthage) of pious memory, and all together praised and glorified God. Then the blessed Fulgentius traversed the streets of Carthage, visiting his friends and blessing them, he rejoiced with them that did rejoice, and wept with them that did weep; and so having satisfied all their wishes, he bade farewell to his brethren and went forth out of Carthage, finding on all the roads people coming to meet him in the way with lanterns, and candles, and boughs of trees, and great

joy, giving praises to the ineffable God, who had wondrously made the blessed Fulgentius well pleasing in the sight of all men. He was received in all the Churches as if he were their bishop, and thus the people throughout Byzacene rejoiced as one man over his return."

Arrived at Ruspe, S. Fulgentius diligently laboured to correct what was evil, and restore what was fallen down, and strengthen what was feeble in his diocese. The persecution had lasted seventy years, so that many abuses had crept in, and the faith of many was feeble, and ignorance prevailed. He carried out his reformation with such gentleness; that he won, sooner or later, the hearts of the most vicious.

In a Council, held at Junque, in 524, a certain bishop, name Quodvultdeus, disputed the precedency with the bishop of Ruspe, who made no reply, but took the first place accorded him by the council. However, S. Fulgentius publicly desired, at the convention of another council, that he might be allowed to yield the precedence to Quodvultdeus.

About a year before his death, the bishop retired from all business to prepare his soul for its exit, to a little island named Circinia. The necessities of his flock recalled him, however, to Ruspe for a little while.

He bore the violent pains of his last illness with great resignation, praying incessantly, "Lord grant me patience now, and afterwards pardon." He called his clergy about him, and asked them to forgive him if he had shewn too great severity at any time, or had offended them in any way, and then, committing his soul into the hand of God as a merciful Creator, he fell asleep in the evening of January 1st, A.D. 533, in his sixty-fifth year.

Relics, at Bourges, in France, where May 16, is observed as the Feast of his translation, in the year 714.

## S. MOCHUA OR CUAN.

(ABOUT 6TH CENT.)

[Commemorated in the ancient Irish Martyrologies on the 11th April; probably as being the day of his translation. But he died on Jan. 1st. The life of S. Mochua, from an Irish legend in the Bollandists, is full of the wildest fable.]

SAINT MOCHUA was the son of a certain Cronan, of noble race, and spent his youth in fighting. At the age of thirty, he laid aside his arms and burnt a house with all its contents which had been given to him by his uncle, saying that a servant of Christ should take nothing from sinners. Then he settled at a spot called Teach Mochua. He is said to have healed S. Finnan, or Munnu, of leprosy, and when S. Finnan was about to return home, and his horse broke its leg, S. Mochua summoned a stag out of the forest to come and draw the vehicle, in place of the horse.

In his time the first stone Church was erected in Ireland by S. Kienan, and during the building of the Church, there fell no rain to impede the masons, for the clouds were stayed by the prayers of S. Mochua. He is said to have founded thirty Churches. To assist in drawing wood from the forest to build these Churches, Mochua called to his aid twelve stags, which served as patiently and obediently as oxen. And when his virtues drew to him many people and much praise, the old man fled from place to place, for he considered that the glory of this world would turn his heart from the glory of the world to come. And when very aged, he escaped with his oratory bell into a wild and mountainous part, and there the clapper fell to the ground, at a place called Dagrinnis. He was troubled in spirit, so bleak and lonely did the place appear; but an angel announced to him that there he was to build a cell, and there to die; and in this spot he spent thirty years, and wrought many miracles, and died in the ninety-ninth year of his age.

It is difficult to clear the lives of many of the Irish Saints from the fable wherewith lively imaginations have invested them in their oral transmission through many hundreds of years.



### S. MOCHUA OR CRONAN, OF BALLA.

[The day of his death is unknown. He is here mentioned because of the similarity of his name of that of S. Mochua, to Teach Mochua. His life is legendary.]

SAINT MOCHUA, or Cronan, was the third son of Began, a man of good family. As a child he was despised by his parents, and sent to keep sheep. But S. Congal passing by his father's house, called the boy to follow him, and made him a monk. S. Mochua founded the monastery of Balla, in Connaught. He departed to the Lord in the fifty-sixth year of his age.



### S. ODILO, AB. CLUNY.

(B. 962 ; D. 1049.)

[Roman Martyrology. Two lives of S. Odilo are extant, one written by Jotsald, a monk, who had lived under his rule, and who wrote it for Stephen, the nephew of the Saint. The other, a very inferior life, by S. Peter Damian. Both are printed in the Bollandists, but the first is from an imperfect MS. It was printed entire by Mabillon, Acta SS. O. S. B.]

ODILO belonged to the family of Mercœur, one of the most illustrious of Auvergne. Jotsald says:—"In the beginning of the account of his virtues I must relate what happened to him as a boy. And lest it be thought incredible, I mention that I heard it from those to whom he was wont to narrate the circumstance. When he was quite a little boy in his father's house, before he was sent to school, he was destitute



of almost all power in his limbs, so that he could not walk or move himself without help. It happened that one day his father's family were moving to another place, and a nurse was given charge of him to carry him. On her way, she put the little boy down with her bundles before the door of a Church dedicated to the Mother of God, as she and the rest were obliged to go into some adjacent houses to procure food. As they were some while absent, the boy finding himself left alone, impelled by Divine inspirations, began to try to get to the door and enter the Church of the Mother of God. By some means, crawling on hands and knees, he reached it, and entered the Church, and went to the Altar, and caught the Altar vestment with his hands; then with all his power, stretching his hands on high, he tried to rise, but was unable to do so, his joints having been so long ill-united. Nevertheless, Divine power conquered, strengthening and repairing the feeble limbs of the boy. Thus, by the intervention of the Mother of God, he rose, and stood upon his feet whole, and ran here and there about the Altar. The servants returning to fetch their bundles, and not finding the child, were much surprised, and looked in all directions, and not seeing him, became greatly alarmed. However, by chance, entering the Church, they saw him rambling and running about it; then they recognised the power of God, and joyously took the boy in their arms, and went to their destination and gave him, completely whole, to his parents, with great gladness."

As a child, he showed singular simplicity, modesty and piety. "Thus passed his childish years, and as the strength of youth began to succeed to boyhood, he silently meditated how to desert the flesh-pots of Egypt, and to strive to enter the Land of Promise through the trials of the world. O good Jesu! how sweet is Thy call! how sweet the inspiration of Thy Spirit, which as soon as Thou strikest on the

heart, turns the fire of the Babylonish furnace into love of the celestial country. So ! as soon as thou striketh the heart of the youth, thou changest it." Whilst he was thus meditating, S. Majolus passed through Auvergne, and Odilo came to him ; then the old man looking on the graceful form and comely face of the youth, and by the instinct of the Saints seeing into his soul, he loved him greatly ; also the youthful Odilo felt a great affection for the aged monk. And when they spoke to one another, Odilo opened his heart to Majolus, and the venerable man encouraged the youth to persevere in his good intentions.

Shortly after, Odilo left his home "as Abraham of old went forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and sought admittance into the Abbey of Cluny, as into the Promised Land. O good Jesu ! how pleasant it was to see this sheep shorn of its worldly fleece, again ascend as from the baptismal font ! Then wearing our habit, you might have seen our sheep amongst the others of His flock, first in work, last in place, seeking the pastures of eternal verdure ; attending to the lamps, sweeping the floors, and doing other common offices. But the pearl could not remain long concealed. After four years, S. Majolus, after many hard labours borne for Christ, went out of the darkness of Egypt, entered Jerusalem, and was placed in eternal peace by Christ. As death approached, he chose Odilo to be his successor, and to him and to the Lord he committed his flock." But S. Odilo shrank from the position for which his youth, as he considered, disqualified him ; however, he was elected by the whole community, and was therefore unable to refuse the office wherewith he was invested by the vote of the brethren, and the desire of the late Abbot.

His disciple, Jotsald, gives a very beautiful picture of his master. He describes him as being of middle stature, with a face beaming with grace, and full of authority ; very ema-

ciated and pale ; his eyes bright and piercing, and often shedding tears of compunction. Every motion of his body was grave and dignified ; his voice was manly, and modulated to the greatest sweetness, his speech straightforward and without affectation or artificiality.

His disciple says that he would recite psalms as he lay on his bed, and falling asleep, his lips would still continue the familiar words, so that the brethren applied to him the words of the bride, "I sleep but my heart waketh," *Ego dormio et cor meum vigilat*. He read diligently, and nothing gave him greater delight than study. His consideration for others was very marked. "He was burdensome to none, to none importunate, desirous of no honour, he sought not to get what belonged to others, nor to keep what was his own." His charity was most abundant, often the brethren feared that it exceeded what was reasonable, but they found that though he gave largely he did not waste the revenues of the monastery. Once, in time of famine, he was riding along a road, when he lit on the naked bodies of two poor boys who had died of hunger. Odilo burst into tears, and descending from his horse, drew off his woollen under garment and wrapping the bodies in it, carefully buried them. In this famine he sold the costly vessels of the Sanctuary and despoiled the Church of its gold and silver ornaments, that he might feed the starving people. Amongst the objects thus parted with was the crown of gold presented to the Abbey by Henry, King of the Romans. He accompanied this Prince in his journey to Rome, when he was crowned emperor, in 1014. This was his second journey thither ; he made a third in 1017, and a fourth in 1022. Out of devotion to S. Benedict, he paid a visit to Monte Cassino, where he kissed the feet of all the monks, at his own request, which was granted him with great reluctance.

"The convocation of the brethren was regularly held by

him till he was at the point of death. O how joyous he was in the midst of them, as standing in the midst of the choir, and looking to right and left he saw the ring of young plantings, and remembered the verse of David's song, 'Thy children shall be as the olive branches round about thy table.' *Filii tui sicut novellæ olivarum, in circuitu mensæ tuæ.* And the more the number of brothers increased, the more he exhibited his joy of heart by signs. And when some seemed distressed thereat, he was wont to say, Grieve not that the flock has become great, my brothers, He who has called us in, He governs and will provide."

Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, called him the archangel of monks; and the name, says his disciple, became him well. S. Odilo, out of his great compassion for the souls of the dead expiating the penalty of their sins in purgatory, instituted the Commemoration of All Souls for the morrow of All Saints, in the Cluniac order, which was afterwards adopted by the whole Catholic Church in the West. Many incidents of his travels, and miracles that he wrought, are related by his pupil. As he was riding over the Jura mountains in snowy weather, the horse carrying his luggage fell, and was precipitated into the valley, and all the baggage was scattered in the snow-drifts. With much trouble the horse and much of the baggage were recovered, but a valuable Sacramentary, inscribed with gilt letters, and some glass vessels, with embossed work, were lost. That evening Odilo and his monks arrived at a cell under the jurisdiction of S. Eugendus, and being much troubled at his loss, as much rain fell in the night, S. Odilo sent some of the brethren early next morning to search for the lost treasures. But the snow-drifts were so deep that they could not find them, and he was obliged to leave without them. However, as the spring came round, a certain priest named Ermendran, was walking in the glen, and he found the book uninjured, and the



glass goblets unbroken. He brought them to the cell, and on the return of Odilo to the Jura, he received his lost treasures intact.

Another story of a glass vessel comes on good authority. The circumstances were related by Albert, bishop of Como, in these words, "Once our Abbot and Superior came to the court of the Emperor Henry, and whilst there, it happened one day that at table a goblet of glass, of Alexandrine workmanship, very precious, with coloured enamel on it, was placed before him. He called me and Landulf, afterwards bishop of Turin, to him, and bade us take this glass to Odilo. We accordingly, as the Emperor had bidden, took it, and going to the Abbot offered it to him, on the part of the Emperor, humbly bowing. He received it with great humility, and told us to return after a while for the goblet again. Then, when we had gone away, the monks, filled with natural curiosity to see and handle a new sort of thing, passed the vessel from hand to hand, and as they were examining it, it slipped through their fingers to the ground, and was broken. When the gentle man of God was told this, he was not a little grieved, and said, 'My brothers you have not done well, for by your negligence, the young clerks who have the custody of these things will, maybe, lose the favour of the Emperor, through your fault. Now, that those who are innocent may not suffer for your carelessness, let us all go to Church and ask God's mercy about this matter.' Therefore, they all ran together into the Church, and sang psalms and prayed, lest some harm should befall us—Albert and Landulf, each of them earnestly supplicating God for us. When the prayer was over, the holy man ordered the broken goblet to be brought to him. He looked at it, and felt it, and could find no crack or breakage in it. Wherefore, he exclaimed indignantly, 'What are you about brothers? You must be blind to say that the glass is broken, when there is

not a sign of injury done to it.' The brethren considering it, were amazed at the miracle, and did not dare to speak. Then, after a while, I and my companion came back for the vessel, and we asked it of him who was carrying it. He called me apart and returned it to me, bidding me tell the Emperor to regard it as a great treasure. And when I asked his meaning, he told me all that had happened."

S. Odilo seems to have been fond of art, for he rebuilt the monasteries of his order and made them very beautiful, and the Churches he adorned with all the costly things he could procure. The marble pillars for Cluny were brought by his orders in rafts down the Durance into the Rhone, and he was wont to say of Cluny that he found it of wood and left it of marble. He erected over the Altar of S. Peter, in the Church, a ciborium, whose columns were covered with silver inlaid with nigello work.

When he felt that his death approached, he made a circuit of all the monasteries under his sway, that he might leave them in thorough discipline, and give them his last admonitions. On this journey he reached Souvigny, a priory in Bourbonnais, where he celebrated the Vigil of the Nativity, and preached to the people, although at the time suffering great pain. After that, he announced to the brethren in chapter, that he was drawing nigh to his end, and he besought their prayers. As he was too weak to go to the great Church of S. Peter, which was attended by the monks, he kept the festival of the Nativity with a few brethren, whom he detained, to be with him in the Chapel of S. Mary, joyously he præcanted the psalms and antiphons, and gave the benedictions, and performed all the ceremonies of that glad festival, forgetful of his bodily infirmities, knowing that soon he was to see God face to face, in the land of the living, and no more in a glass darkly. Most earnest was he, lest death should come and find him unprepared. Throughout

the Octave he was carried in the arms of the monks to Church, where he assisted at the choir offices, night and day, and at the celebration of the Mass, refreshing himself at the sacred mysteries, and looking forward to the Feast of the Circumcision, when his friend William, Abbot of Dijon, had fallen asleep, on which day, he foretold he also should enter into his rest.

On that day, carried by his brethren, he was laid before the Altar of the Virgin Mother, and the monks sang vespers. Now and then their voices failed through over much sorrow, and then he recited the words of the psalms they in their trouble had omitted. As night crept in at the windows, he grew weaker and fainter. Then the brothers laid sack-cloth and ashes under him, and as he was lifted in the arms of one, brother Bernard, he asked, reviving a little, where he was. The brother answered, "On sack-cloth and ashes." Then he sighed forth, "God be thanked!" and he asked that the little children and the whole body of the brethren might be assembled. And when all were gathered around him, he directed his eyes to the Cross, and his lips moved in prayer, and he died thus in prayer, gazing on the sign of his salvation.

His body was laid in the nave of the Church of Souvigny, near that of S. Majolus.

He is often represented saying mass, with purgatory open beside the Altar, and those suffering extending their hands to him, in allusion to his having instituted the Commemoration of All Souls.



## January 2.

## The Octave of S. Stephen, the First Martyr.

- SS. FRONTASIUS, AND COMPANIONS, *M. M. in Gaul.*  
 SS. MARTYRS, at *Lichfield, circ. A.D. 304.*  
 S. ISIDORE, *B. C., in Egypt, 4th Cent.*  
 S. MACARIUS, *Ab. at Alexandria, A.D. 394.*  
 S. ASPASIUS, *C. at Melun, France, A.D. 550.*  
 S. MAXIMUS, *Ab. M., in France, A.D. 614.*  
 S. ADALHARDT, *Ab. of Corbie, A.D. 826.*  
 S. SILVESTER, *Monk of Trani, in S. Italy, A.D. 1185.*

## THE HOLY MARTYRS OF LICHFIELD.

(A.D. 304.)



LICHFIELD derives its name from Lyke-field, the field of dead bodies, because it is traditionally said, that in the persecution of Diocletian, many Christians suffered there for the faith. The arms of Lichfield are a plain strewn with corpses. Nothing certain is known of this event.



## S. MACARIUS OF ALEXANDRIA, AB.

(A.D. 394.)

[There were two Macarii. Both are commemorated together by the Greeks, on Jan. 19th; but the Latins commemorate S. Macarius of Alexandria, on Jan. 2nd; and S. Macarius the Egyptian, on Jan. 15th. The history of this S. Macarius is perfectly authentic, being written by S. Palladius (B. 368,) in the year 421; the writer knew S. Macarius personally, having been nine years in "the cells," of which S. Macarius was priest. Three of these years Macarius and Palladius lived together; so that, as the author says, he had every opportunity of judging of his manner of life and actions.]

SAINT MACARIUS, the younger, was born in Alexandria, of poor parents, and followed the trade of confectioner. Desir-



ous of serving God with his whole heart, he forsook the world in the flower of his age, and spent upwards of sixty years in the deserts, in the exercise of fervent penance and prayer. He first retired into the Thebaid or Upper Egypt, about the year 335; then, aiming at greater disengagement, he descended to Lower Egypt, in or about the year 373. Here there were three deserts almost adjoining each other; that of Scete; that of the Cells, so called because of the multitude of cells wherewith its rocks were honey-combed; and a third, which reached the western bank of the Nile, called the Nitrian desert. S. Macarius had a cell in each of these deserts. When he was in Nitria he gave advice to those who sought him. But his chief residence was in the desert of the Cells. There each hermit lived separate, assembling only on Saturday and Sunday, in the Church, to celebrate the Divine Mysteries, and to partake of the Holy Communion. All the brothers were employed at some handicraft, generally they platted baskets or mats. All in the burning desert was still; in their cells the hermits worked, and prayed, and cooked their scanty victuals, till the red ball of the sun went down behind the sandy plain to the west, then from all that region rose a hum of voices, the rise and fall of song, as the evening psalms and hymns were being chanted by that great multitude of solitaries in dens and caves of the earth.

Palladius has recorded an instance of the great self-denial observed by these hermits. A present was made to S. Macarius of a bunch of grapes, newly gathered. The holy man carried it to a neighbouring solitary who was sick; he sent it to another, and each wishing that some dear brother should enjoy the fruit rather than himself, passed it on to another; and thus the bunch of grapes made the circuit of the cells, and was brought back to Macarius.

The severity of life practised by these hermits was great.

For seven years together S. Macarius lived on raw herbs and pulse, and for the three following years contented himself with four or five ounces of bread a day. His watchings were not less surprising. He told Palladius that it had been his great desire to fix his mind on God alone for five days and nights continuously. And when he supposed he was in the proper mood, he closed his cell and stood up and said, "Now thou hast angels and archangels and all the Heavenly host in company with thee. Be in Heaven and forget earthly things." And so he continued for two nights and days, wrapped in Heavenly contemplations, but then his hut seemed to flame about him, even the mat on which he stood, and his mind was diverted to earth. "But it was as well, said he; for I might have fallen into pride."

The reputation of the monastery of Tabenna, under S. Pachomius, drew him to it in disguise. S. Pachomius told him he seemed too far advanced in years to begin to practise the austerities undergone by himself and his monks; nevertheless, on his earnest entreaty he admitted him. Then Lent drew on, and the aged Macarius saw the monks fasting, some two whole days, others five, some standing all night, and sitting at their work during the day. Then he, having soaked some palm leaves, as material for his work, went apart into a corner, and till Easter came, he neither ate nor drank, nor sat down, nor bowed his knee, nor lay down, and sustained life on a few raw cabbage leaves which he ate on Sundays; and when he went forth for any need he returned silently to his work, and occupied his hands in plating, and his heart in prayer. But when the others saw this, they were astonished, and remonstrated with S. Pachomius, saying, "Why hast thou brought this fleshless man here to confound us with his austerities. Send him away, or we will desert this place." Then the Abbot went to Macarius, and asked him who he was, and when he told his

name, Pachomius was glad, and cried, "Many years have I desired to see thee. I thank thee that thou hast humbled my sons; but now, go thy way, sufficiently hast thou edified us; go, and pray for us." Macarius, on one occasion, to subdue his flesh, filled two great baskets with sand, and laying them on his shoulders, walked over the hot desert, bowed beneath them. A friend meeting him offered to ease him of his burden, but "No," said the old hermit, "I have to torment my tormentor;" meaning his body.

One day, a gnat stung him in his cell, and he killed it. Then, ashamed that he had allowed himself to be irritated by the petty insect, and to have lost an opportunity of enduring mortification with equanimity, he went to the marshes of Scete, and stayed there six months, suffering greatly from the stings of the insects. When he returned, he was so disfigured by their bites, that he was only recognized by his voice.

The terrible severity with which these Egyptian hermits punished themselves is perhaps startling, but it was something needed at a time when the civilized world was sunk in luxury, profligacy and indifference. That was a time which called for a startling and vivid contrast to lead minds into self-inspection. "Private profligacy among all ranks was such as cannot be described in any modern pages. The clergy of the cities, though not of profligate lives, and for the most part unmarried, were able to make no stand against the general corruption of the age, because—at least if we are to trust such writers as Jerome and Chrysostom—they were giving themselves up to ambition and avarice, intrigue and party spirit. No wonder if, in such a state of things, the minds of men were stirred by a passion akin to despair. It would have ended often, but for Christianity, in such an actual despair as that which had led, in past ages,

more than one noble Roman to slay himself, when he lost all hope for the Republic. Christianity taught those who despaired of society, of the world—in one word, of the Roman empire, and all that it had done for men—to hope at last for a Kingdom of God after death. It taught those, who, had they been heathens and brave enough, would have slain themselves to escape out of a world which was no place for honest men, that the body must be kept alive, at least, for the sake of the immortal soul, doomed, according to its works, to endless bliss or endless torment. But that the world—such, at least, as they saw it then—was doomed, scripture and their own reason taught them. They did not merely believe, but see, in the misery and confusion, the desolation and degradation around them, that all that was in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, was not of the Father, but of the world; that the world was passing away, and the lust thereof, and that only he who did the will of God could abide for ever. They did not merely believe, but saw, that the wrath of God was revealed from Heaven against all unrighteousness of men; and that the world in general was treasuring up to themselves wrath, tribulation, and anguish, against a day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who would render to every man according to his works. That they were correct in their judgment of the world about them, contemporary history proves abundantly. That they were correct, likewise, in believing that some fearful judgment was about to fall on man, is proved by the fact that it did fall; that the first half of the fifth century saw, not only the sack of Rome, but the conquest and desolation of the greater part of the civilized world, amid bloodshed, misery, and misrule, which seemed to turn Europe into a chaos, which would have turned it into a chaos, had there not been a few men left who still felt it possible and necessary to