

patron and titular saint of a most extensive parish, where he is honoured with extraordinary devotion; his feast is most famous, and the church and well, which bear his name, are visited by pilgrims.

See Colgan, MSS. ad 22 Maij.

MAY XXIII.

ST. JULIA, V. M.

From her authentic acts given by Ruinart, in an appendix to his edition of the history of Victor Vitensis, de Persec. Vandal.

FIFTH AGE.

SHE was a noble virgin at Carthage, who, when that city was taken by Genseric in 439, was sold for a slave to a Pagan merchant of Syria. Under the most mortifying employments of her station, by cheerfulness and patience she found, besides her sanctification, a present happiness and comfort which the world could not have afforded. All the time she was not employed in her master's business was devoted to prayer and reading books of piety. She fasted very rigorously every day but Sunday; nor could all the entreaties of her master, who was charmed with her fidelity and other virtues, nor the hardships of her situation, prevail with her to be more tender of herself. The merchant thought proper to carry her with him in one of his voyages to Gaul, where he imported the most valuable commodities of the Levant. Having reached the northern part of Corsica, or that point now called Capo-Corso, he cast anchor and went on shore to join the Pagans of the place in an idolatrous festival kept there at that time with the sacrifice of a bull. Julia was left at some distance because she would not be defiled

by the superstitious ceremonies which she openly reviled. Felix, the governor of the island, who was a bigoted Pagan, asked the merchant who this woman was who dared to insult the gods. He informed him that she was a Christian, and that all his authority over her was too weak to prevail with her to renounce her religion; but that he found her so diligent and faithful he could not part with her. The governor offered him four of his best female slaves in exchange for her. But the merchant, whose name was Eusebius, replied, "No: all you are worth will not purchase her; for I would freely lose the most valuable thing I have in the world rather than be deprived of her." However, the governor, whilst Eusebius was drunk and asleep, took upon him to compel her to sacrifice to his gods. He proffered to procure her liberty if she would comply. The saint made answer that she was as free as she desired to be as long as she was allowed to serve Jesus Christ; and whatever should happen she would never purchase her liberty by so abominable a crime. Felix thinking himself derided by her undaunted and resolute air, in a transport of rage caused her to be struck on the face, and the hair of her head to be torn off; and lastly, ordered her to be hanged on a cross till she expired. Certain monks of the isle of Gorgon (which is now called La Gorgona, and lies between Corsica and Leghorn) carried off her body; but in 763, Desiderius king of Lombardy removed her relics to Brescia, where her memory is celebrated with great devotion.

St. Julia, whether free or a slave, whether in prosperity or in adversity, was equally fervent and devout. She adored all the sweet designs of providence; and far from complaining, she never ceased to praise and thank God under all his holy appointments, making them always the means of her virtue and sanctification. God, by an admi-

nable chain of events, raised her by her fidelity to the honour of the saints, and to the dignity of a virgin and martyr.

SAINT DESIDERIUS, BISHOP OF LANGRES, MARTYR.

THE good shepherd is always ready, in imitation of his divine model, to lay down his life for his sheep. Such this holy pastor approved himself. When certain Pagan barbarians ravaged that part of Gaul, St. Desiderius, accompanied with his clergy, went out to meet them; but was massacred with his followers, and fell a victim to save his flock. Sigebert says this happened in the invasion of Chrocus the German king, under Gallien; but Tillemont thinks it rather ought to be placed in 411, when the Alans, Sueves, and Vandals plundered that country.

See Tillemont, t. 11. p. 540. Gall. Christ. Nov. t. 4. p. 510.

SAINT DESIDERIUS, BISHOP OF VIENNE, MARTYR.

WHEN queen Brunehaut governed the courts of her two sons, Theodebert, king of Austrasia, and Theodoric of Burgundy, this zealous pastor boldly reprov'd her for her incests and cruelties; but a sermon which he preached before her and Theodoric on chastity, chiefly in the words of St. Paul, procured him the crown of martyrdom; for, in his return home, he was by their order and contrivance murdered by three assassins in a village now called St. Didier de Chalaraine, near the brook of that name in the principality of Dombes, in 612.

See Fredegarius, &c. quoted by Henschenius.