

Baptism, is an instruction on original sin, and the effects of this sacrament, by which we are reborn, as by chrism, or confirmation we receive the Holy Ghost by the hands of the bishop. He adds a moving exhortation that, being delivered from sin, and having renounced the devil, we no more return to sin; such a relapse after baptism being much worse. "Hold therefore, strenuously," says he, "what you have received, preserve it faithfully; sin no more; keep yourselves pure and spotless for the day of our Lord." Besides these three books, he wrote one against the play of the stag, commended by St. Jerom, but now lost. The heathens had certain infamous diversions with a little stag at the beginning of every year, mentioned by St. Ambrose, (in ps. 141.) and by Nilus, (ep. 81.) It seems from the sermons, 129, 130, in the appendix to St. Augustine's, (t. 5.) that it consisted of masquerades, dressed in the figures of wild beasts. Some Christians probably joined in them. St. Pacian's seal dictated that book against it, but the effect it produced at that time, seemed chiefly to make many more curious and more eager to see that wicked play, as Saint Pacian himself says in the beginning of his exhortation to penance. The beauty of this holy doctor's writings can only be discovered by reading them. His diction is elegant, his reasoning just and close, and his thoughts beautiful: he is full of unction, when he exhorts to virtue, and of strength when he attacks vice.

ST. CATHERINE OF BOLOGNA, VIRGIN,

ABBESS OF THE POOR CLARES IN THAT CITY.

SHE was born of noble parentage at Bologna, in 1413. Early ardent sentiments of piety seemed to have prevented in her the use of reason. At twelve years of age she was placed in quality of a young maid of honour in the family of the princess Margaret, daughter to Nicholas of Est, marquis of Ferrara. Two years after, upon the marriage of that princess, she found means to recover her liberty, and entered herself in a community of devout ladies of the Third Order of St Francis, at Ferrara, who soon after formed themselves into a regular monastery, and adopted the austere rule of St. Clare. A new nunnery of Poor Clares being founded at Bologna, St. Catherine was chosen first prioress, and sent thither by Leonarda, abbess of the monastery of Corpus Christi, in which she had made her religious profession at Ferrara. Catherine's incredible zeal and solicitude for the souls of sinners made her pour forth prayers and tears, almost without intermission, for their salvation. She always spoke to God or of God, and bore the most severe interior trials with an heroic patience and cheerfulness. She looked upon it as the greatest honour to be in anything the servant of the spouses of Christ, and desired to be despised by all, and to serve all in the meanest employments. She was

favoured with the gifts of miracles and prophecy : but said she had been sometimes deceived by the devil. She died on the 9th of March, 1463, in the fiftieth year of her age. Her body is still entire, and shown in the church of her convent through bars and glass, sitting richly covered, but the hands, face, and feet naked. It was seen and described by Henschenius, Las-sels, and other travellers. Her name was inserted in the Roman Martyrology by Clement VIII., in 1592. The solemnity of her canonization was performed by Clement XI., though the bull was only published by Benedict XIII., in 1724.(1) A book of her revelations was printed at Bologna, in 1611. She also left notes in her prayer-book of certain singular favours which she had received from God. These revelations were published and received their dress from another hand, which circumstance is often as great a disadvantage in such works as if an illiterate and bold transcriber were to copy, from a single defective manuscript, Lycophron, or some other obscure author, which he did not understand. St. Catherine wrote some treatises in Italian, others in Latin, in which language she was well skilled. The most famous of her works is the book entitled, *On the Seven Spiritual Arms*. See her life in Bollandus, written by F. Paleotti, fifty years after her death.

MARCH X.

THE FORTY MARTYRS OF SEBASTE.

From St. Basil's Homily on their festival, Hom. 20. t. 1. p. 453. and three discourses of St. Gregory of Nyssa, t. 2. p. 203. t. 3. p. 499. 504. followed by St. Ephrem. ed. Vatic. Gr. and Lat. t. 2. p. 341. St. Gaudentius, St. Chrysostom, quoted by Photius. See Tillemont, t. 5. p. 518. Rainart, p. 523. Ceillier, t. 4. p. 62. Jos. Assemani in Cal. Univ. ad. 11. Martii, t. 6. p. 172.

A.D. 320.

THESE holy martyrs suffered at Sebaste, in the Lesser Armenia, under the emperor Licinius, in 320. They were of different countries, but enrolled in the same troop; all in the flower of their age, comely, brave, and robust, and were become considerable for their services. St. Gregory of Nyssa and Procopius

(1) Bullar. Roman. t. 13. p. 87.