

which he put under the rule of St. Columban, though this was afterwards exchanged for that of St. Bennet. Dreading the charge of others, he continued still to live in a neighbouring little cell dedicated to St. Martin.\*

St. Die gave up his soul to God in the arms of St. Hidulphus, on the 19th of June, in 679 or 680. A town called St. Diei rose about his monastery, and this abbey has been since converted into a collegiate church. See Mabillon, sæc. 3. Bened. and Bulteau, 1. 3. c. 34.

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## JUNE XX.

### ST. SILVERIUS, POPE, M.

From *Liberatus in Breviar.* c. 22, *Conc. t. 5*, p. 775. *Marcellinus in Chron. ad ann. 536.* *Anastasius in Pontif. Conc. t. 5.* *Papebroke, t. 4.* *Juniij, p. 13*, and *Muratori's Annals of Italy.*

A. D. 538.

SILVERIUS was son of Pope Hormisdas, who had been engaged in wedlock before he entered the ministry. Upon the death of St. Agapetus, after a vacancy of forty-seven days, Silverius, being then subdeacon, was chosen pope, and ordained on the 8th of June, 536, Theodatus the Goth being king of Italy. Theodoric had bequeathed that kingdom to his grandson Athalaric, under the tuition of his mother Amalasunta, a most wise and learned princess. Athalaric died in 534, after a reign of eight years: when Amalasunta called Theodatus, a nephew of her father Theodoric by a sister, to the throne; but the ungrateful king, jealous of his power, caused her to be confined in

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\* A little before this time St. Gondebert, bishop of Sens, had abdicated his bishopric, and founded the abbey of Senones, three leagues from Jointures, where he died in 675. He is honoured in Lorraine on the 1st of March. In 671, St. Hidulphus having resigned the archbishopric of Trier, founded the abbey of Moien-Moustier, in the middle between those of Jointures, Estival, Senones, and Bodon-Munster. This last abbey, called also St. Saviour's, was founded by the Bishop of Toul, in whose diocess all these monasteries were erected. St. Hidulphus, called in the country St. Hidon, is honoured on the 11th of July. The monastery of Moien-Moustier is usually called St. Hidulphus's, and in union with St. Vanne's, (St. Vitonis,) situated in the city of Verdun, gave birth to the famous congregation of Benedictines, which bears their names in Lorraine, also to that of St. Maur in France.

an island in the lake of Bolsena, and there strangled in a bath before the end of the same year, 534. The shocking barbarity of this action encouraged the emperor Justinian to attempt the reduction of Italy. Belisarius, his general, had been successful in all his wars against rebels at home, the Persians in the East and Gelimer the Vandal in Africa, whom he had brought prisoner to Constantinople in 534; by which victory he extinguished the puissant kingdom of the Vandals, and reunited Africa to the empire, after it had been separated above one hundred years. By the emperor's order in 535, being then consul, he marched with his victorious army against Italy. He that year made himself master of Sicily, and passing thence into Italy in 536, took Naples. Upon which the Goths deposed Theodatus, and raised Vitiges, an experienced officer, to the throne. The senate and people of Rome, at the persuasion of Pope Silverius, opened the city to the imperialists, who entered by the Asinarian gate, whilst the Gothic garrison retired by the Flaminian towards Ravenna, where Vitiges had shut himself up.\*

Theodora, the empress, a violent and crafty woman, seeing Justinian now master of Rome, resolved to make use of that opportunity to promote the sect of the Acephali, or most rigid Eutychian, who rejected the council of Chalcedon, and also the Henoticon of Zeno, which Petrus Mongus, the Eutychian patriarch of Alexandria, had received, endeavouring in some degree to qualify that heresy. Anthimus, patriarch of Constantinople, was violently suspected of abetting the Acephali, and by the credit of the empress had been translated, against the canons, from the see of Trapezus or Trebisonde to that of the imperial

\* It cost Belisarius two years more before he took that unfortunate prince in Ravenna, and carried him to Constantinople. After which, the Goths having chosen Evaric, and afterwards Totila, kings, under this latter they retook and plundered Rome twice, and recovered all Lower Italy and Sicily; till Narses, successor to Belisarius, Totila having been slain in a skirmish in 552, put an end to the Gothic kingdom in Italy. Belisarius being recalled into the East, and sent against the Persians and Huns, was at length accused of having been privy to a conspiracy against Justinian in 563, and lost his estates and honours, as Theophanes and Cedrenus testify; but the same authors add, that he recovered them again, and Cedrenus tells us that he died in peace in 565. That his eyes were plucked out, and he reduced to beg his bread in the streets of Constantinople, saying, Give a farthing to poor Belisarius, is a story founded on no better authority than that of John Tzetzes, a lying Greek poet in the twelfth century.

city. When Pope Agapetus came to Constantinople, in 536, he refused to communicate with Anthimus because he could never be brought to own in plain terms two natures in Christ ; whereupon he was banished by Justinian ; and St. Menas, an orthodox holy man, was ordained bishop of Constantinople by Pope Agapetus himself, who by a circular letter notified, that " the heretical bishop had been deposed by the apostolic authority, with the concurrence and aid of the most religious emperor." This affair gave the empress great uneasiness, and she never ceased studying some method of recalling Anthimus, till the taking of Rome offered her a favourable opportunity of attempting to execute her design. Silverius being then in her power, she endeavoured to win him over to her interest, and wrote to him requiring that he would acknowledge Anthimus lawful bishop, or repair in person to Constantinople, and re-examine his cause on the spot. The good pope was sensible how dangerous a thing it was to oppose the favourite project of an empress of her violent temper, and said with a sigh in reading her letter, that this affair would in the end cost him his life. However he, without the least hesitation or delay, returned her a short answer, by which he peremptorily gave her to understand, that she must not flatter herself that he either could or would come into her unjust measures, and betray the cause of the Catholic faith. The empress saw from the firmness of his answer, that she could never expect from him any thing favourable to her impious designs, and from that moment resolved to compass his deposition. Vigilius, archdeacon of the Roman Church, a man of address, was then at Constantinople ; whither he had attended the late pope Agapetus. To him the empress made her application, and finding him taken by the bait of ambition, promised to make him pope, and to bestow on him seven hundred pieces of gold, provided he would engage himself to condemn the council of Chalcedon, and receive to communion the three deposed Eutychian patriarchs, Anthimus of Constantinople, Severus of Antioch, and Theodosius of Alexandria. The unhappy Vigilius having assented to these conditions, the empress sent him to Rome, charged with a letter to Belisarius, commanding him to drive out Silverius, and to contrive the election of Vigilius to the pontificate. Belisarius was at first un-

willing to have any hand in so unjust a proceeding; but after showing some reluctance, he had the weakness to say: "The empress commands, I must therefore obey. He who seeks the ruin of Silverius shall answer for it at the last day; not I." (1) Vigilius urged the general, on one side, to execute the project, and his wife Antonina on the other, she being the greatest confidant of the empress, and having no less an ascendant over her husband than Theodora had over Justinian.

The more easily to make this project to bear, the enemies of the good pope had recourse to a new stratagem, and impeached him for high treason. Vitiges the Goth returned from Ravenna in 537, with an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men, and invested the city of Rome. The siege lasted a year and nine days, during which both Goths and Romans performed prodigies of valour; but the latter defeated all the attempts and stratagems of the barbarians, and in the end obliged them to retire. The pope was accused of corresponding during the siege with the enemy, and a letter was produced, which was pretended to have been written by him to the king of the Goths, inviting him into the city, and promising to open the gates to him. Belisarius saw evidently this to be a barefaced calumny, and discovered the persons who had forged the said letter, namely, Marcus, a lawyer, and Julianus, a soldier of the guards, who had been both suborned by the pope's enemies. The general, therefore, dropped this charge of treason, but entreated the pope to comply with the will of the empress, assuring him he had no other means of avoiding the loss of his see, and the utmost calamities. Silverius always declared that he could never condemn the council of Chalcedon, nor receive the Acephali to his communion. Upon leaving the general's house, he fled for sanctuary to the basilic of the martyr St. Sabina; but a few days after, by an artful stratagem of Belisarius, was drawn thence, and summoned to repair to the Pincian palace, where the general resided during the siege. He was admitted alone, and his clergy, whom he left at the door, saw him no more. Antonina received him sitting upon her bed, whilst Belisarius was seated at her feet; she loaded him with reproaches, and immediately a subdeacon tore the pall off his

(1) Anastas. in Pontif.

shoulders. He was then carried into another room, stripped of all his pontifical ornaments, and clothed with the habit of a monk. After this it was proclaimed that the pope was deposed, and become a monk. Belisarius the next day caused Vigilius to be chosen pope, and he was ordained on the 22d of November, 537. In the mean time Silverius was conducted into banishment to Patara, in Lycia. The bishop of that city received the illustrious exile with all possible marks of honour and respect; and thinking himself bound to undertake his defence, soon after the pope's arrival repaired to Constantinople, and having obtained a private audience, spoke boldly to the emperor, terrifying him with the threats of the divine judgments for the expulsion of a bishop of so great a see, telling him—"There are many kings in the world, but there is only one pope over the church of the whole world."\* It must be observed that these were the words of an oriental bishop, and a clear confession of the supremacy of the Roman see. Justinian, who had not been sufficiently apprized of the matter, appeared startled at the atrocity of the proceedings, and gave orders that Silverius should be sent back to Rome, and in case he was not convicted of the treasonable intelligence with the Goths, that he should be restored to his see; but if found guilty, should be removed to some other see. Belisarius and Vigilius were uneasy at this news, and foreseeing that if the order of the emperor were carried into execution, the consequence would necessarily be the restoration of Silverius to his dignity, they contrived to prevent it, and the pope was intercepted in his road towards Rome. His enemies saw themselves again masters of his person, and Antonina resolving at any rate to gratify the empress, prevailed with Belisarius to deliver up the pope to Vigilius, with full power to secure him as he should think fit. The ambitious rival put him into the hands of two of his officers, called the defenders of the church, who conveyed him into the little inhospitable island of Palmaria, now called Palmeruelo, over against Terracina, and near two other abandoned desert islands, the one called Pontia, now Ponza, and the other Pandataria, now Vento Tiene. In this place Silverius died in a short time of hard usage; Liberatus,

\* Multos esse dicens in hoc mundo reges, et non unum sicut ille unus est papa super ecclesiam totius mundi. Liberatus in Breviar. c.22, p. 775

from hearsay, tells us of hunger; but Procopius, a living witness, says he was murdered, at the instigation of Antonina, by one Eugenia, a woman devoted to their service. The death of Pope Silverius happened on the 20th of June, 538. Vigilius was an ambitious intruder and a schismatic so long as St. Silverius lived; but after his death became lawful pope by the ratification or consent of the Roman church, and from that time renounced the errors and commerce of the heretics. He afterwards suffered much for his steadfast adherence to the truth; and though he entered as a mercenary and a wolf, he became the support of the orthodox faith.

The providence of God in the protection of his church never appears more visible than when he suffers tyrants or scandals seemingly almost to overwhelm it. Then does he most miraculously interpose in its defence to show that nothing can make void his promises. Neither scandals nor persecutions can make his word fail, or overcome the church which he planted at so dear a rate. He will never suffer the devil to wrest out of his hands the inheritance which his Father gave him, and that kingdom which it cost him his most precious blood to establish, that his Father might always have true adorers on earth, by whom his name shall be for ever glorified. In the tenth century, by the power and intrigues of Marozia, wife to Guy, marquis of Tuscany, and her mother and sister, both called Theodora, three women of scandalous lives, several unworthy popes were intruded into the apostolic chair, and ignorance and scandals gained ground in some parts. Yet at that very time many churches were blessed with pastors of eminent sanctity, and many saints preached penance with wonderful success; nor did any considerable heresy arise in all that century. Pride, indeed, and a conceit of learning, are the usual source of that mischief. But this constant conservation of the church can only be ascribed to the singular protection of God, who watches over his church, that it never fail.

#### SAINT GOBAIN, PRIEST AND MARTYR.

HAVING served God from his childhood in Ireland, his own country, and being there ordained priest by St. Fursey, he passed into France soon after that holy man, out of a desire