

## JULY XX.

## ST. JOSEPH BARSABAS, C.

He was one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord, and was put in competition with St. Matthias to succeed the traitor Judas in the apostleship.(1) St. Chrysostom(2) remarks that St. Joseph was not displeased, but rejoiced in the Lord to see the preference given to St. Matthias. After the dispersion of the disciples he preached the gospel to many nations; and among other miracles, drank poison without receiving any hurt, as Papias, and from him Eusebius, testify.(3) This saint, from his extraordinary piety, was surnamed the Just.

The lives of the apostles and primitive Christians was a miracle in morals, and a sensible effect of Almighty grace. Burning with holy zeal, they had no interest on earth but that of the divine honour, which they sought in all things; and being warmed with the expectation of an eternal kingdom, they were continually discoursing of it, and comforting one another with the hopes of possessing it; and they did little else but prepare to die. Thus by example, still more than by words, they subdued their very enemies to the faith, and brought them to a like spirit and practice. Their converts, by a wonderful change of manners, became in a moment new creatures. Those who had been the most bitter enemies, long bent to lust and passion, became the most loving, forgiving, and chaste persons in the world. Has grace wrought in us so perfect a conversion? Do our lives glorify God's name in this manner, by a spirit and practice agreeable to the principles of our divine faith?

## ST. MARGARET, V. M.

According to the ancient Martyrologies, she suffered at Antioch in Pisidia, in the last general persecution. She is said to have been instructed in the faith by a Christian nurse, to have been prosecuted by her own father, a priest of the idols; and after many torments, to have gloriously finished her martyrdom by the sword. Her name occurs in the Litany inserted

(1) Act. i. 20.

(2) Hom. 3, in Act.

(3) Eus. Hist. l. 3, c. 39.

in the old Roman order, and in the most ancient calendars of the Greeks. From the east her veneration was exceedingly propagated in England, France, and Germany, in the eleventh century, during the holy wars. Her body is now kept at Montefiascone in Tuscany. Vida, the glory of the Christian muses, has honoured St. Margaret who is one of the titular saints of Cremona, his native city, with two hymns; begging of God through her prayers, not long life, riches, or honours, but the grace of a happy death and a holy life, that he might be admitted, with a devout and pious heart, to praise God in the choir of his holy servants. See his hymns, and Pinus the Bolandist, Julij, t. 5, p. 28.

### SS. JUSTA AND RUFINA, MM.

THESE holy martyrs were two Christian women at Seville in Spain, who maintained both themselves and many poor persons by selling earthen ware. A fervent soul finds in the most ordinary course of life occasions of exercising many heroic acts of virtue, and makes every ordinary action a perfect holocaust by performing it with a most ardent desire of pleasing God with the entire sacrifice of itself. Such were the lives of these two faithful servants of God in the world. So perfect a virtue deserved to be honoured with the crown of martyrdom. Though these saints gave all their substance to the poor, and were desirous to serve every one for the edification of their souls; yet no motives could draw them into any criminal condescension. Not to concur to the idolatrous superstitions, they refused to sell vessels for the use of heathenish sacrifices. The Pagans, offended at their religious scruple, when Dioclesian's edicts renewed the persecution, broke all the ware in their shop, and impeached them for their faith before the governor. The prefect, after they had boldly confessed Christ, commanded them to be stretched on the rack, and their sides in the mean time to be torn with iron hooks. An idol was placed near the rack with incense, that if they would offer sacrifice, they should be that moment released; but their fidelity was not to be shaken. Justa expired on the rack: which when the judge saw, he ordered Rufina to be strangled, and their bodies to be