

acquit himself of his mediatorship between God and his people.\* It was also a peculiar custom at Vienne in the sixth century, that some monk, of whose sanctity the people entertained a high opinion, was chosen, who should voluntarily lead the life of a recluse, being walled up in a cell, and spending his whole time in fasting, praying, and weeping to implore the divine mercy in favour of himself and his country. This practice would have been an abuse and superstition, if any person relying on the prayers of others, were themselves more remiss in prayer or penance. St. Chef was pitched upon for this penitential state, which obligation he willingly took upon himself, and discharged with so much fervour as to seem desirous to set no bounds to his tears and mortifications. An extraordinary gift of miracles made his name famous in the whole country. He died about the year 575, and was buried in the monastery of St. Laurence. His relics were translated to a collegiate church of which he is the titular patron, and which gives the name of St. Chef to the town where it stands, in Dauphine, eight leagues from Vienne. This saint is named in the Roman Martyrology. See his life written by Ado, archbishop of Vienne, in Mabill. Sæc. 1. Ben. p. 678.

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## OCTOBER XXX.

### ST. MARCELLUS THE CENTURION, MARTYR.

From the authentic acts of his martyrdom in Baronius and Surius, and most correctly in Ruinart, who has published with them the short acts of St. Cassian, p. 312, Tillem. t. 4, p. 575.

A. D. 298.

THE birth-day of the emperor Maximian Herculeus was cele-

\* Every priest receives the charge of being a common intercessor, and by divine right is bound to offer the holy sacrifice and his earnest prayers, not only for the remission of his own sins, but also for those of the people, for whom, by his office, he is appointed the intercessor. (Heb. v. l. 3; S. Chrys. de Sacerdot. l. 6, p. 424, t. 1, ed. Ben.) And theologians and canonists agree that every curate of a parish is obliged to offer up his mass, at least every Sunday and festival, for those souls in particular that are committed to his charge. Conc. Trid. sess. 23, de Reform. c. 1. Gavant, Soto, Bonacina, several answers of the Congr. of the Council at Rome quoted by Pasqualig. qu. 851. Reiffenstuel, Barbosa, de Offic. Parochi, the Constitution of Bened. XIV. which begins, *Cum semper oblatas, &c.*

brated in the year 298, with extraordinary feasting and solemnity. Pompous sacrifices to the Roman gods made a considerable part of this solemnity. Marcellus, a Christian centurion or captain of the legion of Trajan, then posted in Spain, not to defile himself with taking part in those impious abominations, cast away his military belt at the head of his company, declaring aloud that he was a soldier of Jesus Christ, the eternal King. He also threw down his arms and the vine-branch, which was the mark of his post of centurion ; for the Roman officers were forbid to strike a soldier with any instrument except a vine-branch, which the centurions usually carried in their hands. The soldiers informed Anastasius Fortunatus, prefect of the legion, by whose order Marcellus was committed to prison. When the festival was over, this judge ordered Marcellus to be brought before him, and asked him what he meant by his late proceedings. Marcellus said, "When you celebrated the emperor's festival on the 12th before the calends of August, (the day on which Maximian had been declared Cæsar,) I said aloud that I was a Christian, and could serve no other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Fortunatus told him that it was not in his power to connive at his rashness, and that he was obliged to lay his case before the emperor Maximian and Constantius Cæsar. Spain was immediately subject to Constantius, who was at that time Cæsar, and most favourable to the Christians. But Marcellus was sent under a strong guard to Aurelianus Agricolaus, vicar to the prefect of the prætorium, who was then at Tangier, in Africa. Agricolaus asked him whether he had really done as the judge's letter set forth : and upon his confessing the fact, the vicar passed sentence of death upon him for desertion and impiety, as he called his action. St. Marcellus was forthwith led to execution and beheaded, on the 30th of October. His relics were afterwards translated from Tangier to Leon in Spain, and are kept in a rich shrine in the chief parish church in that city, of which he is the titular saint.

Cassian, the secretary or notary of the court, refused to write the sentence which the vicar pronounced against the martyr, and threw his pencil and table-book on the ground. Agricolaus, rising in a rage from his seat, asked him why he behaved in that manner ? "Because," said Cassian, "the sentence which

you have dictated is unjust." He was immediately hurried to prison, and examined again about a month after. The firmness with which he defended his former answer procured him the crown of martyrdom. He was beheaded on the 3rd of December. These two martyrs are mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on their respective days.

We justly honour the martyrs, whom God himself honours. Martyrdom is the most heroic act of divine love, and the most perfect and entire sacrifice man can make of himself to God. Of all the goods of this life, man has nothing more precious and dear than his life and honour. And what stronger proof can he give of his fidelity to the law of God than to embrace with joy an ignominious and cruel death rather than consent to sin? Nor does any thing require a more heroic degree of courage and firmness than to suffer torments at the very thought of which nature shudders. God proportions his rewards and crowns to the measure of our sufferings and love for him. How great then, is the glory, how abundant the recompence which attends the martyrs! They rejoiced to see their torments redoubled manifold, because they had before their eyes the incomparably greater increase of grace, divine love and eternal glory. If we shrink under the least sufferings, it is plain our faith and our idea of everlasting bliss must be very weak, and our love faint and imperfect.

#### ST. GERMANUS, BISHOP OF CAPUA, C.

THIS holy prelate was sent by Pope Hormisdas legate to the Emperor Justin, in 519, to engage the Orientals to put an end to the schism which had continued forty years; had been fomented by the emperors Zeno and Anastasius, both favourers of heretics, and by Acacius and other patriarchs of Constantinople. The embassy was attended with the desired success; the heretics were condemned, and the schism entirely abolished. In it St. Germanus and his fellow legates suffered much from the heretics, but escaped out of their hands. St. Gregory the Great relates that this saint saw Paschasius, the deacon of Rome, long after his death, in the flames of purgatory, for having adhered to the schism of Laurence against Symmachus.\*

\* St. Gregory only tells us that he received this account when a child