

made it his chief study, during the twenty-six years of his abbacy, to learn to die, he joyfully received the last summons, and departed from this life to a better in 653. His name is inserted in the Gallican and Roman Martyrologies. See his life written by a disciple, and Bulteau.

DECEMBER IX.

ST. LEOCADIA, VIRGIN, MARTYR.

A. D. 304.

THE name of St. Leocadia is highly revered in Spain. This holy virgin was a native of Toledo, and was apprehended by an order of Dacian, the cruel governor under Dioclesian, in 304. Her constancy was tried by torments, and she died in prison. For, hearing of the martyrdom of St. Eulalia, she prayed that God would not prolong her exile, but unite her speedily with her holy friend in his glory; in which prayer she happily expired in prison. Three famous churches in Toledo bear her name, and she is honoured as principal patroness of that city. In one of those churches most of the councils of Toledo were held; in the fourth of these she is honourably mentioned. Her relics were kept in that church with great respect, till, in the incursions of the Moors, they were conveyed to Oviedo, and some years afterwards to the abbey of St. Gulsain, near Mons in Haynault. By the procurement of King Philip II. they were translated back to Toledo with great pomp, that king, his son Prince Philip, his daughter Elizabeth, and the empress Mary his sister, being present at their solemn reception in the great church there on the 26th of April, 1589.

St. Leocadia, being called to the trial, exerted all heroic Christian virtues, because she had made her whole life an apprenticeship of them, and their practice had been familiar to her. Some people say it was easy for Christians to be totally disengaged from the world, and to give themselves up to prayer and penance when they daily and hourly expected to be called upon to lay down their lives for Christ. But were we not blinded by the world, and if the enchantment of its follies, the near prospect of eternity, the uncertainty of the hour of our

death, and the repeated precepts of Christ were equally the subjects of our meditation, these motives would produce in us the same fervent dispositions which they did in the primitive Christians. How much soever men now-a-days are strangers to these gospel truths, for want of giving themselves leisure to consider them, Christians are bound to be totally disentangled from worldly affections in order to unite their hearts closely to God, that they may receive the abundant graces and favours which He communicates to souls which open themselves to him. They are bound to renounce sensuality, and the disorders and vanities of the world, and to be animated with a spirit of meekness, peace, patience, charity, and affectionate good-will towards all men, zeal, piety, and devotion. They are bound to be prepared in the disposition of their hearts to leave all things, and to suffer all things for his love.

THE SEVEN MARTYRS AT SAMOSATA

IN the year 297 the Emperor Maximian, returning victorious from the defeat of the Persian army, celebrated the quinquennial games at Samosata, the capital of Syria Comagene, upon the banks of the Euphrates. On this occasion he commanded all the inhabitants to repair to the temple of fortune, situate in the middle of the city, to assist at the solemn supplications and sacrifices which were there to be made to the gods. The whole town echoed with the sound of trumpets, and was infected with the smell of victims and incense. Hipparchus and Philotheus, persons for birth and fortune of the first rank in the city, had some time before embraced the Christian faith. In a secret closet in the house of Hipparchus, upon the eastern wall, they had made an image of the cross, before which, with their faces turned to the east, they adored the Lord Jesus Christ seven times a-day. Five intimate friends, much younger in years, named, James, Paragrus, Habibus, Romanus, and Lollianus, coming to visit them at the ninth hour, or three in the afternoon, found them in this private chamber praying before the cross, and asked them why they were in mourning, and prayed at home, at a time when, by the emperor's orders, all the gods of the whole city had been transported into the temple of fortune, and all persons were commanded to assemble there to pray. They.