

Through your grace I watch and resist with all my strength. I cry out that I belong to you alone, and am all yours; and stretching out my hands to you, I say: I have no king but the Lord Jesus. Come, therefore, O Lord; disperse your enemies in your mighty strength, and you will reign in me, because you are my King and my God."

The custom of one priest celebrating several masses on the same day prevailed in many places on great festivals.(1) Prudentius, in his twelfth hymn, *On the Crowns of Martyrs*, mentions, that on the feast of SS. Peter and Paul, the 29th of June, the pope said mass first at the Vatican, and afterwards in the church of St. Paul, without the city. The popes on Christmas-day formerly said three masses, the first in the Liberian basilic, the second in the church of St. Anastasia, the third in the Vatican, as Benedict XIV. proves from ancient Roman orders or missals. St. Gregory the Great speaks of saying three masses on this day.(2) This custom of the popes was universally imitated, and is every where retained, though not of precept. Pouget(3) says, that these three masses are celebrated to honour the triple birth of Christ; the first, by which he proceeds from his Father before all ages; the second, from the Blessed Virgin Mary; and the third, by which he is spiritually born in our souls by faith and charity. That Christ was born on the 25th of December, Pope Benedict XIV. proves by the authority of St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory of Nyssa, St. Austin, &c. and answers the objections of Scaliger and Samuel Basnage.(4) He doubts not but the Greek Church originally kept this festival on the same day;(5) and he takes notice, that among the principal feasts of the year it holds the next place after Easter and Whitsunday.(6)

SAINT ANASTASIA, M.

HER name is mentioned in the canon of the mass, in the sacramentary of St. Gregory, and in other ancient catalogues of mar-

(1) See Bona Ber. Liturg. l. 1, c. 18, n. 6. Joseph. Vicecomes, *De antiquis missæ ritibus*, l. 3, c. 28, &c.

(2) St. Greg. hom. 8. in Evang.

(3) Instit. Cathol. t. 1, p. 814.

(4) *De Festis Christi* a. c. 17, n. 45, p. 411. See F. Honoré, *Règles de Crit.* l. 3, diss. 2, art. 1, and Tillemont, note 4.

(5) N. 67, loco cit. p. 422.

(6) N. 57, p. 417.

tyrs. There stands in Rome an ancient church, which is dedicated to God in her memory. In the acts of St. Chrysogonus we are told, that she was of an illustrious descent at Rome, had St. Chrysogonus for her tutor and director in the faith, and when that holy martyr was apprehended at Aquileia in the persecution of Dioclesian, went thither to comfort him in his chains. It is further related, that after suffering exquisite tortures, she was sentenced by the prefect of Illyricum to be burnt alive in 304. Her body was removed to Rome, and laid in the church which still bears her name. In this church the popes anciently said their second mass on Christmas-night, or rather that of the morning, whence a commemoration of her is made in the second mass. The relics of St. Anastasia were translated to Constantinople in the time of the Emperor Leo, and deposited first in the church of Anastasia or the Resurrection, afterwards in the patriarchal church of St. Sophia: but were lost when that city was taken by the Turks. The Greek Menologies and the Muscovite Calendars commemorate our saint on the 22nd of December, the Roman Missal on the 25th. See on her also Nicephorus, Suidas, and Joſ. Assemani ad 22 Dec. p. 489

Another St. ANASTASIA, called the Elder, was crowned with martyrdom in the persecution of Valerian; others think of Nero. See the Acts of St. Chrysogonus, though of small authority; her Acts in Metaphrastes are of no better stamp.

SAINT EUGENIA, V. M.

SHE suffered at Rome under Valerian about the year 257, and is mentioned by St. Avitus, though we have no authentic acts of her sufferings, those recited by Metaphrastes and Surius deserving no notice. She is also mentioned in the lives of SS. Protus and Hyacinthus, MM. on the 11th of September, p. 116.

DECEMBER XXVI.

SAINT STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR.

See Acts vi. vii. and Tillemont, t. 2, p. 1, Cave. &c.

THAT St. Stephen was a Jew is unquestionable, himself owning that relation in his apology to the people. But whether he

(1) S. Avitus de Virgin. l. 6, p. 1312.