

Henschenius. See also Raderus, in *Bavaria Sancta*, t. 3. p. 4. Gretser, de *Sanctis Eystettensibus*, &c.

### SAINT CÆSARIUS, C.

He was a physician, and brother to St. Gregory Nazianzen. When the latter repaired to Cæsarea, in Palestine, where the sacred studies flourished, Cæsarius went to Alexandria, and with incredible success ran through the circle of the sciences, amongst which oratory, philosophy, and especially medicine fixed his attention. In this last he became the first man of his age. He perfected himself in this profession at Constantinople but excused himself from settling there, as the city and the emperor Constantius earnestly requested him to do. He was afterwards recalled thither, singularly honoured by Julian the Apostate, nominated his first physician, and excepted in several edicts which that prince published against the Christians. He resisted strenuously the insinuating discourses and artifices with which that prince endeavoured to seduce him, and was prevailed upon by the remonstrances of his father and brother to resign his places at court, and prefer a retreat, whatever solicitations Julian could use to detain him. Jovian honourably restored him, and Valens, moreover, created him treasurer of his own private purse, and of Bithynia. A narrow escape in an earthquake at Nice, in Bithynia, in 368, worked so powerfully on his mind, that he renounced the world, and died shortly after, in the beginning of the year 369, leaving the poor his heirs. The Greeks honour his memory on the 9th of March, as Nicephorus testifies, (*Hist. l. 11. c. 19.*) and as appears from the *Menæa* in the Roman Martyrology, he is named on the 25th of February.

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### FEBRUARY XXVI.

#### SAINT ALEXANDER, CONFESSOR,

##### PATRIARCH OF ALEXANDRIA.

From Theodoret, St. Athanasius, &c. See Hermant, *Tillemont*, t. 6. p. 213. 240. Ceillier, t. 4.

A.D. 326.

ST. ALEXANDER succeeded St. Achillas in the see of Alexandria, in 313. He was a man of apostolic doctrine and life, mild, affable,  
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exceedingly charitable to the poor, and full of faith, zeal, and fervour. He raised to the sacred ministry chiefly those who had first sanctified themselves in holy solitude, and was happy in the choice of bishops throughout all Egypt. The devil, enraged to see the havoc made in his usurped empire over mankind, by the disrepute idolatry was generally fallen into, used his utmost endeavours to repair the loss to his infernal kingdom, by procuring the establishment of a most impious heresy. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was his principal instrument for that purpose. This heresiarch was well versed in profane literature, was a subtle dialectician, had an exterior show of virtue, and an insinuating behaviour; but was a monster of pride, vain glory, ambition, envy, and jealousy. Under an affected modesty he concealed a soul full of deceit, and capable of all crimes. He joined Meletius, the bishop of Lycopolis, in the beginning of his schism against St. Peter, our saint's predecessor, in 300: but quitting that party after some time, St. Peter was so well satisfied of the sincerity of his repentance, that he ordained him deacon. Soon after Arius discovered his turbulent spirit, in accusing his archbishop, and raising disturbances in favour of the Meletians. This obliged St. Peter to excommunicate him, nor could he ever be induced to revoke that sentence. But his successor, St. Achillas, upon his repentance, admitted him to his communion, ordained him priest, and made him curate of the church of Baucalis, one of the quarters of Alexandria. Giving way to spite and envy, on seeing St. Alexander preferred before him to the see of Alexandria, (1) he became his mortal enemy: and as the saint's life and conduct were irreproachable, all his endeavours to oppose him were levelled at his doctrine in opposition to which the heresiarch denied the divinity of Christ. This error he at first taught only in private; but having, about the year 319, gained followers to support him, he boldly advanced his blasphemies in his sermons, affirming, with Ebion, Artemas, and Theodotus, that Christ was not truly God; adding what no heretic had before asserted in such a manner, that the Son was a creature, and made out of nothing; that there was a time when he did not exist, and that he was capable of sinning, with other such impieties. St. Athanasius informs us, (2) that he also held that Christ had no other soul than this created divinity or spiritual substance made before the

(1) Theodoret, l. 1. c. 1. Socrates, l. 1. c. 5.

(2) L. de. Adv. Chr. p. 635.

world: consequently, that it truly suffered on the cross, descended into hell, and rose again from the dead. Arius engaged in his errors two other curates of the city, a great many virgins, twelve deacons, seven priests, and two bishops.

One Colluthus, another curate of Alexandria, and many others, declaimed loudly against these blasphemies. The heretics were called Arians, and these called the Catholics Colluthians. St. Alexander, who was one of the mildest of men, first made use of soft and gentle methods to recover Arius to the truth, and endeavoured to gain him by sweetness and exhortations. Several were offended at his lenity, and Colluthus carried his resentment so far as to commence a schism; but this was soon at an end, and the author of it returned to the Catholic communion. But St. Alexander, finding Arius's party increase, and all his endeavours to reclaim him ineffectual, he summoned him to appear in an assembly of his clergy, where, being found obstinate and incorrigible, he was excommunicated together with his adherents. This sentence of excommunication the saint confirmed soon after, about the end of the year 320, in a council at Alexandria, at the head of near one hundred bishops, at which Arius was also present, who repeating his former blasphemies, and adding still more horrible ones, was unanimously condemned by the synod, which loaded him and all his followers with anathemas. Arius lay hid for some time after this in Alexandria, but being discovered, went into Palestine, and found means to gain over to his party Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, also Theognis of Nice, and Eusebius of Nicomedia, which last was of all others his most declared protector, and had great authority with the emperor Constantine, who resided even at Nicomedia, or rather with his sister Constantia. Yet it is clear from Constantine himself, that he was a wicked, proud, ambitious, intriguing man. It is no wonder, after his other crimes, that he became an heresiarch. and that he should have an ascendant over many weak, but well-meaning men, on account of his high credit and reputation at court. After several letters that had passed between these two serpents, Arius retired to him at Nicomedia, and there composed his *Thalia*, a poem stuffed with his own praises, and his impious heresies.

Alexander wrote to the Pope, St. Sylvester, and, in a circular letter, to the other bishops of the church, giving them an account of Arius's heresy and condemnation. Arius, Eusebius, and

many others, wrote to our saint, begging that he would take off his censures. The emperor Constantine also exhorted him by letter to a reconciliation with Arius, and sent it by the great Osius to Alexandria, with express orders to procure information of the state of the affair. The deputy returned to the emperor better informed of the heresiarch's impiety and malice, and the zeal, virtue, and prudence of St. Alexander: and having given him a just and faithful account of the matter, convinced him of the necessity of a general council, as the only remedy adequate to the growing evil, and capable of restoring peace to the church. St. Alexander had already sent him the same advice in several letters.\* That prince, accordingly, by letters of respect, invited the bishops to Nice, in Bithynia, and defrayed their expenses. They assembled in the imperial palace of Nice, on the 19th of June, in 325, being three hundred and eighteen in number, the most illustrious prelates of the church, among whom were many glorious confessors of the faith. The principal were our saint, St. Eustathius, patriarch of Antioch, St. Macarius of Jerusalem, Cecilian, archbishop of Carthage, St. Paphnutius, St. Potamon, St. Paul of Neocessarea, St. James of Nisibis, &c. St. Sylvester could not come in person, by reason of his great age; but he sent his legates, who presided in his name.† The emperor

\* Rufinus (l. 1. Hist. c. 1.) says, that the council was assembled by the advice of the priests. *Ex sacerdotum sententia.* And the third council of Constantinople attributes its convocation to St. Sylvester as much as to the emperor. *Constantinus et Sylvester magnam in Niceâ synodum congregabant.* Conc. Constantinopolitanum tertium, Act. 18. p. 1049. t. 6. Conc.

† This is acknowledged by the oriental bishops assembled at Constantinople, in 552, (t. 5. Conc. p. 337, 338.) The legates were Vito, or Victor, and Vincent, two Roman priests, to whom the pope joined Osius, bishop of Cordova, as being the most renowned prelate of the West, and highly esteemed by the emperor. *Ipse etiam Osius ex Hispania nominis et famæ celebritate insignis, qui Sylvestri episcopi maximæ Romæ locum obtinebat, una cum Romanis presbyteris Vitone et Vincentio adfuit;* says Gelasius of Cyzicus. (Hist. Conc. Nicen. l. 2. c. 5. t. 2. Conc. p. 155.) The same is affirmed by Pope Adrian. (t. 6. Conc. p. 1810.) In all the editions of this council, Osius, with the two priests, Vito and Vincent, is first named among the subscribers. Socrates also names them first, and before the patriarchs. *Osius Episc. Cordubæ, ita credo, ut sup. dictum est. Vito et Vincentius presbyteri urbis Romæ. Egypti Alexander Episc. Antiochiæ Eustathius, &c.* (Socr. l. 1. c. 13.) It is then false what Blondel (de la primauté de l'Eglise, p. 1195.) pretends, that St. Eustathius of Antioch presided. He is indeed called, by Faundus, (l. 8. c. 1. & l. 11. c. 1.) the first of the council; and by Nicephorus, (Chronol. p. 146.) the chief of the bishops, because he was the first among the orientals; for St. Alexander of Egypt was certainly before him in rank. Theodoret (l. 1. c. 6.) says, he sat the first on the right hand in the assembly. And it appears from Eusebius, that the pope's legates

Constantine entered the council without guards, nor would he sit till he was desired by the bishops, says Eusebius.(1) Theodoret says,(2) that he asked the bishops' leave before he would enter.

The blasphemies of Arius who was himself present, were canvassed for several days. Marcellus of Ancyra, and St. Athanasius, whom St. Alexander had brought with him, and whom he treated with the greatest esteem, discovered all the impiety they contained, and confuted the Arians with invincible strength. The heretics, fearing the indignation of the council, used a great deal of dissimulation in admitting the Catholic terms. The fathers, to exclude all their subtillies, declared the Son consubstantial to the Father, which they inserted in the profession of their faith, called the Nicene creed, which was drawn up by Osius, and to which all subscribed, except a small number of Arians. At first they were seventeen, but Eusebius of Cæsarea received the creed the day following, as did all the others except five, namely, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Theognis of Nice, Maris of Chalcedon, Theonas and Secundus of Lybia, the two bishops who had first joined Arius. Of these also Eusebius, Maris, and Theognis conformed through fear of banishment. The Arian historian Philostorgius(3) pretends to excuse his heroes, Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis, by saying they inserted an iota, and signed(4) like in substance, instead of(5) the same substance; a fraud in religion which would no way have excused their hypocrisy. Arius, Theonas, and Secundus, with some Egyptian priests, were banished by the order of Constantine, and Illyricum was the place of their exile. The council received Meletius and his schismatical adherents upon their repentance; but they afterwards relapsed into their schism, and part of them joined the Arians. The council added twenty canons of discipline, and was closed about the 25th of August.\*

(1) L. 3. de vit. Constant. c. 10.

(2) L. 1. c. 7.

(3) L. 1. c. 9.

(4) Ὁμοούσιος.

(5) Ὁμοούσιος.

and the patriarch of Alexandria sat at the head on the left side. This might be the more honourable as being on the right to those that came in. It is certain that the pope's legates presided in the council of Chalcedon, where they, in the same manner, sat first on the left, above the patriarch of Alexandria, and the patriarch of Antioch was placed on the right.

\* The Arabic canons are falsely ascribed to the Nicene council, being collected out of other ancient synods.

Constantine gave all the prelates a magnificent entertainment, and dismissed them with great presents to their respective sees. St. Alexander, after this triumph of the faith, returned to Alexandria; where, after having recommended St. Athanasius for his successor, he died in 326, on the 26th of February, on which day he is mentioned in the Roman Martyrology.

A true disciple of Christ, by a sincere spirit of humility and distrust in himself, is, as it were, naturally inclined to submission to all authority appointed by God, in which he finds his peace, security, and joy. This happy disposition of his soul is his secure fence against the illusions of self-sufficiency and blind pride, which easily betrays men into the most fatal errors. On the contrary, pride is a spirit of revolt and independence: he who is possessed with this devil is fond of his own conceits, self-confident, and obstinate. However strong the day-light of evidence may be in itself, such a one will endeavour to shut up all the avenues of light, though some beams force themselves into his soul to disturb his repose, and strike deep the sting of remorse: jealousy and a love of opposition foster the disorder, and render it incurable. This is the true portraiture of Arius, and other heresiarchs and firebrands of the universe. Can we sufficiently detest jealousy and pride, the fatal source of such great evils! Do we not discover, by fatal symptoms, that we ourselves harbour this monster in our breasts? Should the eye be jealous that the ear hears, and disturb the functions of this or the other senses, instead of regarding them as its own and enjoying their mutual advantage and comfort, what confusion would ensue!

### ST. PORPHYRIUS, BISHOP OF GAZA,

#### CONFESSOR.

From his life, written with great accuracy by his faithful disciple Mark. See Fleury, t. 5. Tillemont, t. 10. Chatelain, p. 777. In the king's library at Paris is a Greek MS. life of St. Porphyrius, (abridged from that of Mark,) which has never been translated.

A.D. 420.

PORPHYRIUS, a native of Thessalonica in Macedonia, was of a noble and wealthy family. The desire of renouncing the world made him leave his friends and country at twenty-five years of age, in 378, to pass into Egypt, where he consecrated himself to God in a famous monastery in the desert of Scet . After five