

Both John and Paul considered that worldly prosperity which attends impunity in sin as the most dreadful of all judgments. The martyrs, however, by a momentary labor of their conflict, purchased an immense weight of never-fading glory; their torments were, by their heroic patience and invincible virtue and fidelity, a spectacle worthy of God, who looked down upon them from the throne of His glory, and held His arm stretched out to strengthen them, and to put on their heads immortal crowns in the happy moment of their victory.

Both John and Paul were highly venerated by the Roman Church. They have a proper office and mass in the sacramentaries of Saints Gelasius and Gregory the Great; also in the ancient Gallican Liturgy. In England the council of Oxford, in 1222, ordered their festival to be kept of the third class; that is, with an obligation of hearing mass before work. These two saints like all saints, always accounted that they had nothing for Christ so long as they had not resisted to blood, and by pouring forth the last drop completed their sacrifice. Their particular virtue was love toward the poor.

These two court officials were martyred and buried in their own house. Byzas and Pammachius transformed this house into a church dedicated to the two martyrs. Excavations have proven that beneath the church were found their home, the tombs, and the place of their execution. *(excerpted from; www.magnificat.ca; www.bartleby.com; www.catholicculture.org)

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Saints John and Paul, Martyrs

Feast Day: June 26



Reflection

The Saints always consider that they have done nothing for Christ as long as they have not resisted unto blood and completed their sacrifice, even to pouring forth its last drop if God asks it. We must always bear in mind that we owe to God all that we are, and that after all our efforts, we remain unprofitable servants, doing only what we are bound to do.

Saints John and Paul, Martyrs

*These two Saints were brothers and were officers of the Roman army in the days of Constantine the Great. They served in the house of Constance, the daughter of Constantine, who was consecrated to God, their virtues and services to her father rendered them very dear to her. For their excellent work, she bequeathed to them a considerable sum of money which they used to aid poor Christians in works of charity and mercy, until the deaths of both Constantine and Constance.

When Julian the Apostate (361-363) ascended to the imperial throne, he invited both John and Paul to become members of the inner circle of the imperial household. They refused and boldly explained that they did not relish close association with one who had fallen away from Jesus Christ.

Julian had returned to the cult of idols and was attempting to re-establish it in the empire. The Christian brothers saw many wicked men prosper in their impiety, but were not dazzled by their example. They considered that worldly prosperity accompanied by impunity in sin is the most dreadful of all judgments, indicating reprobation. History also reveals how false and short-lived was the glittering prosperity of Julian. So, both brothers then resigned their position in the palace.

While still in power, the apostate attempted to win back these influential officers into active service. When they refused, Julian gave them ten days to reconsider their position, threatening them with death if at the end of that time they refused to do his bidding and sacrifice to Jupiter. The brothers used the interval to distribute what remained of their possessions to the poor so that they could begin their journey home to God with less hindrance, while at the same time benefitting many who would 'receive them into the everlasting dwellings' (Luke 6:9).

The officer Terentianus, who at the end of the ten days, brought to their house a little idol of Jupiter for their adoration, found them instead in prayer. In the middle of the night they were decapitated secretly in their own garden, since the emperor feared their execution might cause sedition in Rome. He instigated a rumor that they had been exiled, but the demons took hold of possessed persons in Rome, and published the fact of their martyrdom everywhere.

The son of the officer who had slain them also became possessed, and it was only after their father, Terentianus, had prayed at the tomb of the martyrs that the child was liberated. This so impressed him that he became a Christian, with all his family, and wrote the history we have reported.