

SAINT SEBASTIAN

Little more than the fact of his martyrdom can be proved about Saint Sebastian. In the "Depositio martyrum" of the chronologer of 354, it is mentioned that Sebastian was buried on the Via Appia. Saint Ambrose ("In Psalmum cxviii") states that Sebastian came from Milan and even in the time of Saint Ambrose was venerated there. The Acts relate that he was an officer in the imperial bodyguard and had secretly done many acts of love and charity for his brethren in the Faith. When discovered to be a Christian, in 286, he was handed over to the Mauretanian archers, who pierced him with arrows; he was healed by the widowed Saint Irene. He was finally killed by the blows of a club.

These stories are not historical and are considered unworthy of belief. The earliest mosaic of Saint Sebastian belongs to the year 682, shows a grown, bearded man, in court dress but contains no trace of an arrow. It was the art of the Renaissance that first portrayed him as a youth pierced by arrows. In 367 a basilica, which was one of the seven chief churches of Rome, was built over his grave. The present church was completed in 1611. His relics in part were taken in the year 826 to Saint Medard at Soissons.

Sebastian is considered a protector against the plague. Celebrated answers to prayer for his protection against the plague are related of Rome in 680, Milan in 1575, and Lisbon in 1599. He was widely venerated during the middle ages. Paul the Deacon relates about the great pestilence of Rome ceasing when an altar was dedicated in honor of Saint Sebastian. His feast day is 20 January.

*(excerpted from: www.catholicireland.net; www.catholicculture.org; www.reu.org)

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Saints Fabian and Sabastian

Feast Day: January 20



Saints Fabian and Sebastian, pray for us.

Saint Fabian

Saints Fabian and Sebastian

*Saints Fabian and Sebastian have always been venerated together. Their names were coupled in the ancient martyrologies and are linked together in the Calendar of Filocalus of 354 which gives the commemoration dates of past popes and martyrs. The same calendar also notes 25th December as the date for celebrating the Birthday of Christ. They are still in the Litany of the Saints.

Saint Fabian was Pope from 236-250 A.D. He promoted the consolidation and development of the Church. He divided Rome into seven diaconates for the purpose of extending aid to the poor. He was one of the first victims of the persecution of Decius, who considered him as a rival and personal enemy.

Saint Sebastian, a native of Milan, was an officer in Diocletian's imperial guard. He became a Christian and suffered martyrdom upon orders of the emperor.

Saint Fabian, a Roman, was as energetic as he was admired and respected. The extraordinary circumstances of his election is related by Eusebius (Hist. Eccl., VI, 29). After the death of Anterus, he had come to Rome, from his farm and was in the city when the new election for a pope began. Suddenly, a dove descended upon his head; the sight recalled the Gospel scene of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Savior to the assembled brethren. Divinely inspired, they chose Fabian and placed him in the Chair of Peter.

During his reign of fourteen years there was a lull in the storm of persecution. Little is known of his pontificate. The "Liber Pontificalis" says that he divided Rome into seven districts, each supervised by a deacon, and appointed seven sub-deacons, to collect, in conjunction with other notaries, the "acta" of the martyrs, i.e. the reports of the court-proceedings on the occasion of their trials (cf. Eus., VI, 43). There is a tradition that he instituted the four minor orders.

Considerable work was done in the catacombs under the direction of Pope Fabian. He also consecrated in the year 245, seven bishops as missionaries to Gaul (France), among them Saint Denys of Paris. Saint Cyprian mentions the condemnation by Fabian for heresy of a certain Privatus (Bishop of Lambaesa) in Africa. The famous Origen did not hesitate to defend, before Fabian, the orthodoxy of his teaching.