

3. This is the concept behind the “Constantinian Church”. Thus, the term, as we can understand it means, that for the temporal character of the Church, with her correlated richness and solemnity in worship, her sacral buildings, the pomp of her dignitaries, etc., is by it’s very nature the essence of the “Constantinian Church.”

This is the work which Sylvester started and continues to this day. It is the heritage of the One, Holy, Roman , Apostolic, Catholic Church founded by Jesus Christ. *****(excerpted from: traditioninaction.org)

REFLECTION

*****Never forget to thank God daily for having made you a member of His indefectible Church, and grow daily in your attachment, devotion, and loyalty to the Vicar of Christy. Ubi Petrus, ibi ecclesia: Where Peter is, there the Church is. *****(excerpted from: www.magnificat.ca)

Feast Day Customs (December 31st)

*****Frankly, the popular focus is on the end of the secular year, but on this, the seventh day of Christmas, a plenary indulgence may be gained, under the usual conditions, by reciting the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving for the past year.

Every place has its own customs on this day, most being rooted in the desire to bring blessings for the following year, to do things so as to “start things out on the right foot,” and often with the belief that how you find yourself at midnight portends how things will be for you the rest of the new year. Merriment is the rule in all cases, and “lucky foods” are eaten, all of which vary from place to place. In Spain, one must eat 12 grapes at midnight to fend off evil in the following year. Pea Soup is a German “lucky food,” and in France it is oysters. In the United States, black-eyed peas are consumed. Other customs of New Year’s Eve in the U.S. include kissing at the stroke of midnight; banging on pots and pans, honking car horns, and generally making noise at that time; “resolutions” (commitments to break a bad habit, add a good habit, or fulfill a goal of some sort in the coming year); drinking champagne or sparkling wine; watching the “ball fall” in Times Square. No matter what year or century, December 31st, New Year’s Eve has it’s many customs.

******(excerpted from: www.fisheaters.com)

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Pope Saint Sylvester I

Feast Day December 31



The Baptism of Constantine

by Pope Sylvester I

Pope St. Sylvester I

***The date of the birth of St. Sylvester is unknown; he died on 31 December, 335. According to the “Liber pontificalis” (ed. Duchesne, I, 170) he was the son of a Roman named Rufinus; the legendary “Vita beati Sylvestri” called his mother Justa. After the death of Miltiades (Melchiades), Sylvester was made Bishop of Rome and occupied this position for twenty-one years (314-335). This was the era of Constantine the Great, when the public position of the Church improved from past persecutions.**

****(excerpted from: www. traditionalcatholic.net)**

****Although the place of honor in the service of Jesus belongs to the Martyrs, the confessors also fought for the glory of His name and the spreading of His Kingdom. They are crowned with the crown of justice. Jesus has made it a part of His own glory and they are near His throne. The Church would, therefore, grace this glorious Christmas Octave with the name of one of her children, who should represent at Bethlehem the whole class of her Saints who had not been martyred. She chose St. Sylvester, a confessor who governed the Church of Rome, a Pontiff whose reign was long and peaceful; a servant of God adorned with every virtue, who was sent to edify and guide the world immediately after the end of 300 years of Christian persecution gaining victory by martyrdom under the leadership of the thirty predecessors of Sylvester all of whom had been martyred.**

**** (excerpted from: www.traditioninaction.org)**

*****Emperor Constantine was also persecuting Christians when he developed Measelry (leprosy). He intended to kill 3000 children and soak in their blood to see if he could be healed of his affliction. The mothers of the children came crying to him to spare their children and Constantine relented. The following night SS Peter and Paul appeared to Emperor Constantine saying to him that because of his actions he should send for Sylvester and be baptized by him and he would be healed of his malady. Eventually the emperor went to St. Peter’s Church, confessed all of his sins, and did penance and was eventually healed. When Helen the mother of Constantine, who was dwelling in Bethany, heard of her sons conversion, sent him a letter of praise for turning away from false idols. Thus begins the era of peace for the Church.**

***** (excerpted from: www.catholic-saints.net)**

******Thus, Sylvester becomes a messenger of peace. The peace which Christ came into the world to give and which the Angels sang on Christmas night. He is the friend of Constantine, confirms the Council of Nicaea (325), he organizes the discipline of the Church for the new era in which She is now entering: the era of peace. His thirty predecessors in the See of Peter imagined Jesus in His sufferings; Sylvester represented Jesus in His triumph. Sylvester’s feast during the Octave of Christmas, reminds us that the Divine Child who lies wrapped in swaddling-clothes, and is the object of Herod’s persecution, is, notwithstanding all these humiliations, the Prince of peace, the father of the world to come. ****(excerpted from: traditioninaction.org)**

******Sylvester also defined the nature of the Trinity, especially the divinity of Christ (Nicene Creed) in response to the Arian controversy. He also continued the building of many**

churches in Rome, and with support from Constantine built the first Basilica of St. Peter along with the cathedral of the pope, even until present time, St. John Latern. He also improved record keeping and established the first martyrology (list of the martyrs of the Church).

******(excerpted from: www.spirituality.org)**

*******In a commentary from The Liturgical Year by Dom Prosper Gueranger, O.S.B., we read that Sylvester lived in a time of transformation of the Church. She was in darkness of night and came to live in the full light of the sun; she was persecuted as a slave and became the Queen; she left the catacombs and began to dwell in the palaces. Under Sylvester’s inspiration and command, the greater work began of building the Church as an institution, as a sovereign religious society, the work some call the “constantinization” of the Church.**

This term means the following: 1. Emperor Constantine made a decree giving liberty to the Catholic Church; then he issued another decree forbidding the false cults to carry on openly. 2. Wanting to repair for the unjust persecution the Church had undergone, Constantine gave his mother-in-law’s palace to the Church. This was the palace of the Laterani, and it became the first basilica of the Pope. It is the Basilica of St. John Latern. 3. He began to bestow special honors on the Bishops and treated them as official representatives of the Church. 4. The acts of Catholic worship became more solemn because of Constantine’s presence at such ceremonies. 5. He considered the Church to be united to the State. 6. When Constantine changed the capital of the Roman Empire to Byzantium (Constantinople), the Pope remained in Rome, and became the virtual sovereign of the city. The Pope still did not have official temporal power, but practically speaking, he became the temporal of the city.

The results of this ‘constantinization’ of the Church is two-fold:

1. In the political sphere, it pronounced the Catholic Church as the only true Church. As such, the Church deserves to be protected, supported, and respected by the State. Therefore, the Church is an entity more noble than the State and, at depth, given the fact that she is divine, more important than the State. From this principal came the medieval metaphor that the Church is like the sun, and the State like the moon that turns the sun and depends on it.
2. In the religious sphere, it manifested that the most splendid and magnificent earthly things and most beautiful works of art were made first and foremost for the worship of God. So, man should make and reserve the most significant incenses, the purest gold and silver, the most splendid fabrics and clothing for the service of God.

