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Justina the virgin was of the city of Antioch, daughter of a priest of the idols. And every day she sat at a window by a priest which read the gospel, of whom at the last she was converted. And when the mother of her had told it unto her father in his bed, Jesu Christ appeared to them with his angels, saying: Come to me, I shall give to you the kingdom of heaven. And when he awoke, anon they did them to be baptized with their daughter.

JUSTINA'S CONVERSION OF THE MAGICIAN CYPRIAN

And this virgin was strongly grieved and vexed of Cyprian, and at the last she converted him to the faith of Jesu Christ. And Cyprian from his childhood had been an enchanter, for from the time that he was seven years old he was consecrated by his parents to the devil. And he used the craft of necromancy, and made women to turn into juments and beasts as them seemed, and many other things semblable. And he was covetous of the love of Justina, and burnt in the concupiscence of her, and resorted to his art magic that he might have her for himself, or for a man named Acladius, which also burnt in her love.

Justina is said of justice, for by justice she rendered to every each that was his: that is to wit, to God obedience; unto her superior prelate, reverence; to her like and semblable, concord; to them that were beneath and inferior, discipline; to her enemies, patience; unto wretches and to them in distress, compassion and works of pity; and to herself, holiness.

Then he called a devil to him, to the end that he might by him have Justina, and when the devil came he said to him: Why hast thou called me?

And Cyprian said to him: I love a virgin, canst thou not so much that I may have my pleasure of her?

And the devil answered: I that might cast man out of Paradise, and procured that Cain slew his brother, and made the Jews to slay Christ, and have troubled the men, trowest thou I may not do that thou have a maid with thee, and use her at thy pleasure? Take this ointment and anoint withal her house withoutforth, and I shall come and kindle her heart in thy love, that I shall compel her to assent to thee.

And the next night following the devil went and enforced him to move her heart unto unlawful love. And when she felt it, she recommended herself devoutly to God, and garnished her with the sign of the cross, and the devil, all afraid of the sign of the cross, fled away from her, and came again to Cyprian and stood before him.

And Cyprian said to him: Why hast thou not brought to me this virgin?

And the devil said: I see in her a sign which feared me, that all strength is failed in me.

Then Cyprian left him, and called another devil more stronger than he was. And he said: I have heard thy commandment and have seen the non-power of him, but I shall amend it and accomplish thy will.

Then the devil went to her, and enforced to move her heart in love, and inflame her courage in things not honest. And she recommended her to God devoutly, and put from her that temptation by the sign of the cross, and blew on the devil, and threw him anon away from her. And he fled all confused and came tofore Cyprian, and Cyprian said to him: Where is the maid that I sent thee for? and the devil said: I acknowledge that I am overcome and am rebutted, and I shall say how, for I saw in her a sign horrible, and lost anon all my virtue.

Then Cyprian left him, and blamed him, and called the prince of the devils. And when he was come he said: Wherefore is your strength so little, which is overcome of a maid ?

Then the prince said to him: I shall go and vex her with great fevers, and I shall inflame more ardently her heart, and I shall arouse and bedew her body with so ardent desire of thee that she shall be all frantic: and I shall offer to her so many things that I shall bring her to thee at midnight.

Then the devil transfigured himself in the likeness of a maid, and came to this holy virgin, and said: I am come to thee for to live with thee in chastity, and I pray thee that thou say what reward shall we have for to keep us so.

And the virgin answered: The reward is great, and the labour is small.

And the devil said to her: What is that then that God commanded when he said: Grow and multiply and replenish the earth? Then, fair sister, I doubt that if we abide in virginity that we shall make the word of God vain, and be also despising and inobedient, by which we shall fall into a grievous judgment, where we shall have no hope of reward, but shall run in great torment and pain.

Then by the enticement of the devil the heart of the virgin was smitten with evil thoughts, and was greatly inflamed in desire of the sin of the flesh, so that she would have gone thereto, but then the virgin came to herself, and considered who that it was that spake to her. And anon she blessed her with the sign of the cross, and blew against the devil, and anon he vanished away and melted like wax, and incontinent she was delivered from all temptation.

A little while after, the devil transfigured him in the likeness of a fair young man, and entered into her chamber, and found her alone in her bed, and without shame sprang into her bed and embraced her, and would have had a done with her. And when she saw this she knew well that it was a wicked spirit, and blessed her as she had done tofore, and he melted away like wax.

And then by the sufferance of God she was vexed with axes and fevers. And the devil slew many men and beasts, and made to be said by them that were demoniacs that, a right great mortality should be throughout all Antioch, but if Justina would consent unto wedlock and have Cyprian. Wherefore all they that were sick and languishing in maladies lay at the gate of Justina's

father and friends, crying that they should marry her and deliver the city of that right great peril. Justina then would not consent in no wise, and therefore everybody menaced her. And in the sixth year of that mortality she prayed for them, and chased and drove thence all that pestilence.

And when the devil saw that he profited nothing, he transumed and transfigured him in the form of Justina for to defoul the fame of Justina, and in mocking Cyprian he advanced him that he had brought to him Justina. And came to him in likeness of her, and would have kissed him as if she had languished for his love. And when Cyprian saw him and supposed that it had been Justina, he was all replenished with joy, and said: Thou art welcome, Justina, the fairest of all women.

And anon as Cyprian named Justina, the devil might not suffer the name, but as soon as he heard it he vanished away as a fume or smoke. And when Cyprian saw him deceived, he was all heavy and sorrowful, and was then more burning and desirous in the love of Justina, and woke long at the door of the virgin, and as him seemed he changed him sometimes into a bird by his art magic, and sometimes into a woman, but when he came to the door of the virgin he was neither like woman nor bird, but appeared Cyprian as he was.

Acladius, by the devil's craft, was anon turned into a sparrow, and when he came to the window of Justina, as soon as the virgin beheld him, he was not a sparrow, but showed himself as Acladius, and began to have anguish and dread, for he might neither fly ne leap, and Justina dreading lest he should fall and break himself, did do set a ladder by which he went down, warning him to cease of his woodness, lest he should be punished as a malefactor by the law.

Then the devil, being vanquished in all things, returned to Cyprian, and held him all confused tofore him, and Cyprian said to him: And how art not thou overcome, what unhappy is your virtue that ye may not overcome a maid, have ye no might over her, but she overcometh you and breaketh you all to pieces? Tell me, I pray thee, in whom she hath all this great might and strength.

And the devil said: If thou wilt swear to me that thou wilt not depart from me ne forsake me, I shall show to thee her strength and her victory.

To whom Cyprian said: By what oath shall I swear?

And the devil said: Swear thou by my great virtues that thou shalt never depart from me.

And Cyprian said: I swear to thee by thy great virtues that I shall never depart from thee.

Then the devil said to him, weeping to be sure of him: This maid maketh the sign of the cross, and anon then we wax feeble and lose all our might and virtue, and flee from her, like as wax fleeth from the face of the fire.

And Cyprian said then to him: The crucified God is then greater than thou?

And the devil said: Yea, certainly he is greater than all others, and all them that we here deceive, he judgeth them to be tormented with fire inextinguishable.

And Cyprian said: Then ought I to be made friend of him that was crucified, lest I fall hereafter into such pains.

To whom the devil said: Thou hast sworn by the might and virtues of my strengths, the which no man may forswear, that thou shalt never depart from me.

To whom Cyprian said: I despise thee, and forsake thee and all thy power, and renounce thee and all thy devils, and garnish and mark me with the sign of the cross, and anon the devil departed all confused.

Then Cyprian went to the bishop, and when the bishop saw him he weened that he were come to put the Christian men in error, and said: Let it suffice unto thee, Cyprian, them that be without forth, for thou mayst nothing prevail against the church of God, for the virtue of Jesu Christ is joined thereto, and is not overcome.

And Cyprian said: I am certain that the virtue of our Lord Jesu Christ is not overcome.

And then he recounted all that was happened, and did him to be baptized of him. And after, he profited much, as well in science as in life. And when the bishop was dead, Cyprian was ordained bishop, and placed the blessed virgin Justina with many virgins in a monastery, and made her abbess over many holy virgins. St. Cyprian sent then epistles to martyrs and comforted them in their martyrdom.

THE MARTYRDOM OF SAINTS JUSTINA AND CYPRIAN

The earl of that country heard of the fame and renomee of Cyprian and Justina, and he made them to be presented tofore him and demanded them if they would do sacrifice. And when he saw that they abode steadfastly in the faith of Jesu Christ, he commanded that he should be put in a caldron full of wax, pitch, and grease, burning and boiling. And all this gave to them marvellous refreshing, and did to them no grief ne pain.

And the priest of the idols said to the provost of that place: Command me, sire, to stand and to be tofore the caldron, and I shall anon overcome all their virtue.

And then he came tofore the caldron and said: Great is the god Hercules, and Jupiter the father of gods. And anon the great fire issued from under the caldron and anon consumed and burnt him.

Then Cyprian and Justina were taken out of the caldron and sentence was given against them, and they were both beheaded together. And their bodies were thrown to hounds and were there seven days, and after they were taken up and translated to Rome, and as it is said, now they rest at Placentia. And they suffered death in the seventh calends of October [September 26], about the year of our Lord two hundred and eighty, under Diocletian.

The [iconography of St. Justina](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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