

89// HERE FOLLOWETH OF ST. PETER THE APOSTLE

St. Peter the apostle among all other, and above all other, was of most fervent and burning love, for he would have known the traitor that should betray our Lord Jesu Christ, as St. Austin saith: If he had known him he would have torn him with his teeth, and therefore our Lord would not name him to him, for as Chrysostom saith: If he had named him, Peter had arisen and all to-torn him.

Peter went upon the sea; he was chosen of God to be at his transfiguration, and raised a maid from death to life; he found the stater or piece of money in the fish's mouth; he received of our Lord the keys of the kingdom of heaven; he took the charge to feed the sheep of Jesu Christ. He converted at a Whitsuntide three thousand men, he healed Claude with John, and then converted five thousand men; he said to Ananias and Saphira their death before; he healed Æneas of the palsy; he raised Tabitha; he baptized Cornelia; with the shadow of his body he healed sick men; he was put in prison by Herod, but by the angel of our Lord he was delivered.

What his meat was and his clothing, the book of St. Clement witnesseth, for he said: Bread only with olives, and seldom with worts, is mine usage, and I have such clothing as thou seest, a coat and a mantle, and when I have that, I demand no more.

It is said for certain that he bare always a sudary [handkerchief] in his bosom with which he wiped the tears that ran from his eyes; for when he remembered the sweet presence of our Lord, for the great love that he had to him he might not forbear weeping. And also when he remembered that he had rented [separated himself from] him, he wept abundantly great plenty of tears, in such wise that he was so accustomed to weep that his face was burnt with tears as it seemed, like as Clement

Peter had a great name, for he was called Simon Barjona. And Simon is as much to say as right obedient or committing great heaviness. Barjona is as much to say as son of a dove, or of a culvert He was obedient when our Lord called him, for at the voice of one only calling, he obeyed to our Lord. He was committing heaviness and sorrow when he rented [separated himself from] Jesu Christ, for he went out and wept bitterly. He was son of the dove, for he served God with simple intention. Secondly, he was called Cephas which is as much to say as chief, or stone, or blaming with the mouth. He was said chief by reason of the principality in prelation; a stone by reason of his steadfastness in his passion; blaming with his mouth by reason of constancy in his preaching. Thirdly, he was called Peter, which is as much to say as knowing or unhosing [taking off one's pants], and shoeing or unbinding knowing, for he knew the dignity of Christ when he said: Thou art Christ, son of the living God. In unhosing and shoeing, when he unshod his feet from the affection of all deadly and earthly work, saying: Lo! we have left all things, etc. Unbinding, for he hath unbounden the bonds of sin, and that was by the keys that he received of our Lord. And he had three surnames. He was said Simon Johanna, which is as much to say as the beauty of our Lord. Secondly, he was said Simon Johannis, that is to say, to whom it is given. And thirdly, he is said Barjona, that is to say, son of the dove, by which is given to understand that he had beauty of manners, gift of virtues, and abundance of tears, for the dove hath wailing for her song. This name Peter, Jesus promised to put to him: Johannis primo Thou shalt be called Cephas, that is to say, Peter. Secondly, he did that he promised, as it is said, Mathei quarto: And he named Simon Peter, etc. Thirdly, he confirmed it, Mathei XVI: And I say to thee that thou art Peter, and upon this stone, etc. His martyrdom wrote Marcellus, Linus pope, Hegesippus, and Leo the pope.

saith. And saith also that in the night when he heard the cock crow he would weep customably. And after that it is read in *Historia Ecclesiastica* that, when St. Peter's wife was led to her passion, he had great joy and called her by her proper name, and said to her: My wife, remember thee of our Lord.

On a time when St. Peter had sent two of his disciples for to preach the faith of Jesu Christ, and when they had gone twenty days' journey, one of them died, and that other then returned to St. Peter and told him what had happened, some say that it was St. Marcial that so died, and some say it was St. Maternus, and others say that it was St. Frank. Then St. Peter gave to him his staff and commanded that he should return to his fellow, and lay it upon him, which he so did, then he which had been forty days dead, anon arose all living.

ST. PETER'S DISPUTATION WITH SIMON MAGUS

That time Simon the enchanter was in Jerusalem, and he said he was first truth, and affirmed that who that would believe in him he would make them perpetual. And he also said that nothing to him was impossible. It is read in the book of St. Clement that he said that he should be worshipped of all men as God, and that he might do all that he would. And he said yet more: When my mother Rachel commanded me that I should go reap corn in the field, and saw the sickle ready to reap with, I commanded the sickle to reap by itself alone, and it reaped ten times more than any other.

And yet he added hereto more, after Jerome, and said: I am the Word of God, I am the Holy Ghost, I am Almighty, I am all that is of God.

He made serpents of brass to move, and made the images of iron and of stone to laugh, and dogs to sing, and as St. Linus saith, he would dispute with St. Peter and show, at a day assigned, that he was God. And Peter came to the place where the strife should be, and said to them that were there: Peace to you brethren that love truth. To whom Simon said: We have none need of thy peace, for if peace and concord were made, we should not profit to find the truth, for thieves have peace among them. And therefore desire no peace but battle, for when two men fight and one is overcome then is it peace.

Then said Peter: Why darest thou to hear of peace? Of sins grow battles, where is no sin there is peace; in disputing is truth found, and in works righteousness.

Then said Simon: It is not as thou sayest but I shall show to thee the power of my dignity, that anon thou shalt adore me; I am first truth and may flee by the air; I can make new trees and turn stones into bread; endure in the fire without hurting; and all that I will I may do.

St. Peter disputed against all these, and disclosed all his malefices. Then Simon Magus, seeing that he might not resist Peter, cast all his books into the sea, lest St. Peter should prove him a magician, by his books, and went to Rome where he was had and reputed as a god.

HE TRAVELS TO ROME

And when Peter knew that, he followed and came to Rome. The fourth year of Claudius the Emperor, Peter came to Rome, and sat there twenty-five years, and ordained two bishops as his helpers, Linus and Cletus, one within the walls, and that other without. He emended much to preaching of the Word of God, by which he converted much people to the faith of Christ, and healed many sick men, and in his preaching always he praised and preferred chastity. He converted four concubines of Agrippa the provost, so that they would no more come to him, wherefore the provost sought occasion against Peter.

After this, our Lord appeared to St. Peter, saying to him: Simon Magus and Nero purpose against thee, dread thee not, for I am with thee, and shall give to thee the solace of my servant Paul, which to-morn shall come in to Rome.

Then Peter, knowing that he should not long abide here, assembled all his brethren and took Clement by the hand and ordained him a bishop, and made him to sit in his own seat. After this, as our Lord had said tofore, Paul came to Rome, and with Peter began to preach the faith of Christ.

SIMON MAGUS, BELOVED OF NERO, ENGAGES PETER AND PAUL IN DISPUTATIONS

Simon Magus was so much beloved of Nero that he weened that he had been the keeper of his life, of his health, and of all the city. On a day, as Leo the pope saith, as he stood tofore Nero, suddenly his visage changed, now old and now young, which, when Nero saw, he supposed that he had been the son of God. Then said Simon Magus to Nero: Because that thou shalt know me to be the very son of God, command my head to be smitten off and I shall arise again the third day.

Then Nero commanded to his brother to smite off his head, and when he supposed to have beheaded Simon, he beheaded a ram. Simon, by his art magic went away unhurt, gathered together the members of the ram, and hid him three days. The blood of the ram abode and congealed. The third day he came and showed him to Nero, saying: Command my blood to be washed away, for lo I am he that was beheaded, and as I promised I have risen again the third day.

Whom Nero seeing, was abashed [surprised] and bowed verily that he had been the son of God. All this saith Leo.

Sometime also, when he was with Nero secretly within his conclave, the devil in his likeness spake without to the people. Then the Romans had him in such worship that they made to him an image, and wrote above, this title: To Simon the holy God.

Peter and Paul entered to Nero and discovered all the enchantments and malefices of Simon Magus, and Peter added thereto, seeing that like as in Christ be two substances that is of God and man, so are in this magician two substances, that is of man and of the devil. Then said

Simon Magus, as St. Marcelle and Leo witness, lest I should suffer any longer this enemy, I shall command my angels that they shall avenge me on him.

To whom Peter said: I dread nothing thine angels, but they dread me.

Nero said: Dreadest thou not Simon, that by certain things affirmeth his godhead?

To whom Peter said: If dignity or godhead be in him let him tell now what I think or what I do, which thought I shall first tell to thee, that he shall not now lie what I think.

To whom Nero said: Come hither and say what thou thinkest. Then Peter went to him and said to him secretly: Command some man to bring to me a barley-loaf, and deliver it to me privily.

When it was taken to him, he blessed it, and hid it under his sleeve, and then said he: Now Simon say what I think, and have said and done.

Simon answered: Let Peter say what I think.

Peter answered: What Simon thinketh that I know, I shall do it when he hath thought.

Then Simon having indignation, cried aloud: I command that dogs come and devour him.

And suddenly there appeared great dogs and made an assault against Peter. He gave to them of the bread that he had blessed, and suddenly he made them to flee. Then said Peter to Nero: Lo! I have showed you what he thought against me, not in words but in deeds, for where he promised angels to come against me he brought dogs, thereby he showeth that he hath none angels but dogs.

Then said Simon: Hear ye, Peter and Paul; if I may not grieve you here, ye shall come where me it shall behove to judge you. I shall spare you here. *Hæc Leo* [Thus says Leo].

Then Simon Magus, as Hegesippus and Linus say, elate in pride avaulted him that he can raise dead men to life. And it happened that there was a young man dead, and then Nero let call Peter and Simon, and all gave sentence by the will of Simon that he should be slain that might not arise the dead man to life. Simon then, as he made his incantations upon the dead body, he was seen move his head of them that stood by; then all they cried for to stone Peter.

Peter unnethe [with difficulty] getting silence said: If the dead body live, let him arise, walk and speak, else know ye that it is a fantasy that the head of the dead man moveth. Let Simon be taken from the bed.

And the body abode immovable. Peter standing afar making his prayer cried to the dead body, saying: Young man, arise in the name of Jesu Christ of Nazareth crucified.

And anon, he arose living, and walked.

Then, when the people would have stoned Simon Magus, Peter said: He is in pain enough, knowing him to be overcome in his heart; our master hath taught us for to do good for evil.

Then said Simon to Peter and Paul: Yet is it not come to you that ye desire, for ye be not worthy to have martyrdom, the which answered: That is, that we desire to have, to thee shall never be well, for thou liest all that thou sayest.

Then as Marcel saith: Simon went to the house of Marcel and bound there a great black dog at the door of the house, and said: Now I shall see if Peter, which is accustomed to come hither, shall come, and if he come this dog shall strangle him.

And a little after that, Peter and Paul went thither, and anon Peter made the sign of the cross and unbound the hound, and the hound was as tame and meek as a lamb, and pursued none but Simon, and went to him and took and cast him to the ground under him, and would have strangled him. And then ran Peter to him and cried upon the hound that he should not do him any harm. And anon the hound left and touched not his body, but he all torent and tare his gown in such wise that he was almost naked.

Then all the people, and especially children, ran with the hound upon him and hunted and chased him out of the town as he had been a wolf. Then for the reproof and shame he durst not come in to the town of all a whole year after. Then Marcel that was disciple of Simon Magus, seeing these great miracles, came to Peter, and was from then forthon his disciple.

THE DEATH OF SIMON MAGUS

And after, at the end of the year, Simon returned and was received again into the amity of Nero. And then, as Leo saith, this Simon Magus assembled the people and showed to them how he had been angered of the Galileans, and therefore he said that he would leave the city which he was wont to defend and keep, and set a day in which he would ascend into heaven, for he deigned no more to dwell in the earth. Then on the day that he had stablished, like as he had said, he went up to an high tower, which was on the capitol, and there being crowned with laurel, threw himself out from place to place, and began to fly in the air.

Then said St. Paul to St. Peter: It appertaineth to me to pray, and to thee for to command.

Then said Nero: This man is very God, and ye be two traitors.

Then said St. Peter to St. Paul: Paul, brother, lift up thine head and see how Simon flyeth.

Then St. Paul said to St. Peter when he saw him fly so high: Peter, why tarriest thou? perform that thou hast begun, God now calleth us.

Then said Peter: I charge and conjure you angels of Sathanas, which bear him in the air, by the name of our Lord Jesu Christ, that ye bear ne sustain him no more, but let him fall to the earth.

And anon they let him fall to the ground and brake his neck and head, and he died there forthwith.

And when Nero heard say that Simon was dead, and that he had lost such a man, he was sorrowful, and said to the apostles: Ye have done this in despite of me, and therefore I shall destroy you by right evil example. *Hæc Leo* [Thus wrote Leo].

ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL ARE PERSECUTED AND MARTYRED

Then he delivered them to Paulin, which was a much noble man, and Paulin delivered them to Mamertin under the keeping of two knights, Processe and Martinian, whom St. Peter converted to the faith. And they then opened the prison and let them all go out that would go, wherefore, after the passion of the apostles, Paulin, when he knew that they were Christian, beheaded both Processe and Martinian.

The brethren then, when the prison was opened, prayed Peter to go thence, and he would not, but at the last he being overcome by their prayers went away. And when he came to the gate, as Leo witnesseth, which is called *Sancta Maria ad Passus*, he met Jesu Christ coming against him, and Peter said to him: Lord, whither goest thou?

And he said to him: I go to Rome for to be crucified again.

And Peter demanded him: Lord, shalt thou be crucified again.

And he said: Yea.

And Peter said then: Lord, I shall return again then for to be crucified with thee.

This said, our Lord ascended into heaven, Peter beholding it, which wept sore. And when Peter understood that our Lord had said to him of his passion, he returned, and when he came to his brethren, he told to them what our Lord had said. And anon he was taken of the ministers of Nero and was delivered to the provost Agrippa, then was his face as clear as the sun, as it is said.

Then Agrippa said to him: Thou art he that glorifiest in the people, and in women, that thou departest from the bed of their husbands.

Whom the apostle blamed, and said to him that he glorified in the cross of our Lord Jesu Christ. Then Peter was commanded to be crucified as a stranger, and because that Paul was a citizen of Rome it was commanded that his head should be smitten off.

And of this sentence given against them, St. Dionysius in an epistle to Timothy saith in this wise:

O my brother Timothy, if thou hadst seen the agonies of the end of them thou shouldst have failed for heaviness and sorrow. Who should not weep that hour when the commandment of the sentence was given against them, that Peter should

be crucified and Paul be beheaded? Thou shouldst then have seen the turbes [throngs] of the Jews and of the paynims [pagans] that smote them and spit in their visages. And when the horrible time came of their end that they were departed that one from that other, they bound the pillars of the world, but that was not without wailing and weeping of the brethren. Then said St. Paul to St. Peter: "Peace be with thee that art fundament of the church and pastor of the sheep and lambs of our Lord." Peter then said to Paul: "Go thou in peace, preacher of good manners, mediator, leader, and solace of rightful people." And when they were withdrawn far from other I followed my master. They were not both slain in one street.

This saith St. Dionysius.

And as Leo the pope and Marcel witness, when Peter came to the cross, he said: When my Lord descended from heaven to the earth he was put on the cross right up, but me whom it pleaseth him to call from the earth to heaven, my cross shall show my head to the earth and address my feet to heaven, for I am not worthy to be put on the cross like as my Lord was, therefore turn my cross and crucify me my head downward.

Then they turned the cross, and fastened his feet upward and the head downward. Then the people were angry against Nero and the provost, and would have slain them because they made St. Peter so to die; but he required them that they should not let his passion, and as Leo witnesseth, our Lord opened the eyes of them that were there, and wept so that, they saw the angels with crowns of roses and of lilies standing by Peter that was on the cross with the angels.

And then Peter received a book of our Lord, wherein he learned the words that he said. Then as Hegesippus saith: Peter said thus: Lord, I have desired much to follow thee, but to be crucified upright I have not usurped, thou art always rightful, high and sovereign, and we be sons of the first man which have the head inclined to the earth, of whom the fall signifieth the form of the generation human. Also we be born that we be seen inclined to the earth by effect, and the condition is changed for the world weeneth that such thing is good, which is evil and bad. Lord, thou art all things to me, and nothing is to me but thou only, I yield to thee thankings with all the spirit of which I live, by which I understand, and by whom I call thee.

And when St. Peter saw that the good Christian men saw his glory, in yielding thankings to God and commending good people to him, he rendered up his spirit. Then Marcel and Apuleius his brother, that were his disciples, took off the body from the cross when he was dead, and anointed it with much precious ointment, and buried him honourably.

Isidore saith in the book of the nativity and death of saints thus: Peter, after that he had governed Antioch, he founded a church under Claudius the emperor, he went to Rome against Simon Magus, there he preached the gospel twenty-five years and held the bishopric, and thirty-six years after the passion of our Lord he was crucified by Nero turned the head downward, for he would be so crucified: *Hæc Isidorus* [Thus wrote Isidore].

That same day Peter and Paul appeared to St. Dionysius, as he saith in his foresaid epistle in these words: Understand the miracle and see the prodigy, my brother Timothy, of the day of the martyrdom of them, for I was ready in the time of departing of them. After their death I saw them together, hand in hand, entering the gates of the city, and clad with clothes of light, and arrayed with crowns of clearness and light. *Hæc Dionysius* [Thus wrote Dionysius].

THE TYRANNIES AND DEATH OF NERO

Nero was not unpunished for their death and other great sins and tyrannies that he committed, for he slew himself with his own hand, which tyrannies were overlong to tell, but shortly I shall rehearse here some.

He slew his master Seneca because he was afraid of him when he went to school.

Also Nero slew his mother and slit her belly for to see the place where he lay in. The physicians and masters blamed him, and said the son should not slay his mother that had borne him with sorrow and pain.

Then said he, “Make me with child, and after to be delivered, that I may know what pain my mother suffered.” Which by craft they gave to him a young frog to drink, and grew in his belly, and then he said, “But if [unless] ye make me to be delivered I shall slay you all.” And so they gave him such a drink that he had a vomit and cast out the frog, and bare him on hand that because that he abode not his time it was misshapen, which yet he made to be kept.

Then for his pleasure he set Rome afire, which burned seven days and seven nights, and was in a high tower and enjoyed him to see so great a flame of fire, and sang merrily.

He slew the senators of Rome to see what sorrow and lamentation their wives would make.

He wedded a man for his wife. He fished with nets of gold thread, and the garment that he had worn one day he would never wear it ne see it after.

Then the Romans seeing his woodness [madness], assailed him and pursued him unto without the city, and when he saw he might not escape them, he took a stake and sharped it with his teeth, and therewith stuck himself through the body and so slew himself. In another place it is read that he was devoured of wolves. Then the Romans returned and found the frog, and threw it out of the city and there burnt it.

THE RELICS OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL

In the time of St. Cornelius the pope, Greeks stole away the bodies of the apostles Peter and Paul, but the devils that were in the idols were constrained by the divine virtue of God, and cried and said: Ye men of Rome, succour hastily your gods which be stolen from you!

For which thing the good Christian people understood that they were the bodies of Peter and Paul. And the paynims had supposed that it had been their gods. Then assembled great number of Christian men and of paynims also, and pursued so long the Greeks that they doubted to have been slain, and threw the bodies in a pit at the catacombs, but afterward they were drawn out by Christian men.

St. Gregory saith that the great force of thunder and lightning that came from heaven made them so afraid that they departed each from other, and so left the bodies of the apostles at the catacombs in a pit, but they doubted which bones were Peter's and which Paul's, wherefore the good Christian men put them to prayers and fastings, and it was answered them from heaven that the great bones longed to the preacher, and the less to the fisher, and so were departed, and the bones were put in the church of him that it was dedicate of.

And others say that Silvester the pope would hallow the churches and took all the bones together, and departed them by weight, great and small, and put that one-half in one church, and that other half in that other.

MIRACLES OF ST. PETER

The Crippled Woman

And St. Gregory recounteth in his dialogues that, in the church of St. Peter, where his bones rest, was a man of great holiness and of meekness named Gentian, and there came a maid into the church which was cripple, and drew her body and legs after her with her hands, and when she had long required and prayed St. Peter for health, he appeared to her in a vision, and said to her: Go to Gentian, my servant, and he shall restore thy health.

Then began she to creep here and there through the church, and enquired who was Gentian, and suddenly it happed that he came to her that him sought, and she said to him: The holy apostle St. Peter sent me to thee that thou shouldest make me whole and deliver me from my disease.

And he answered: If thou be sent to me from him, arise thou anon and go on thy feet. And he took her by the hand and anon she was all whole, in such wise as she felt nothing of her grief nor malady, and then she thanked God and St. Peter.

A Vision of Saints Peter and Paul

And in the same book St. Gregory saith when that a holy priest was come to the end of his life, he began to cry in great gladness: Ye be welcome, my lords, ye be welcome that ye vouchsafe to come to so little and poor a servant, and he said: I shall come and thank you.

Then they that stood by demanded who they were that he spake to, and he said to them wondering: Have ye not seen the blessed apostles Peter and Paul and as he cried again, his blessed soul departed from the flesh.

THE TIME AND PLACE OF THEIR DEATHS

Some have doubt whether Peter and Paul suffered death in one day, for some say it was the same one day, but one a year after the other. And Jerome and all the Saints that treat of this matter accord that it was on one day and one year, and so is it contained in an epistle of Denis, and Leo the pope saith the same in a sermon, saying: We suppose but that it was not done without cause that they suffered in one day and in one place the sentence of the tyrant, and they suffered death in one time, to the end that they should go together to Jesu Christ, and both under one persecutor to the end that equal cruelty should strain that one and that other. The day for their merit, the place for their glory, and the persecution overcome by virtue. *Hæc Leo.*

Though they suffered both death in one day and in one hour, yet it was not in one place but in diverse within Rome, and hereof saith a versifier in this wise: *Ense coronatus Paulus, cruce Petrus, eodem-Sub duce, luce, loco, dux Nero, Roma locus.* That is to say, “Paul crowned with the sword, and Peter had the cross reversed, the place was the city of Rome.” And howbeit that they suffered death in one day, yet St. Gregory ordained that that day specially should be the solemnity of St. Peter, and the next day commemoration of St. Paul, for the church of St. Peter was hallowed that same day, and also forasmuch as he was more in dignity, and first in conversion, and held the principality at Rome.

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

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

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