

Grapevine Prayer Diary Integrated Notes for January

January

1: The Circumcision of Christ (St. Luke 2:21). “Almighty God: Grant us the true circumcision of the Spirit, that we may in all things obey Thy blessed will” (from the *Book of Common Prayer* Collect).

5: Gerlach (1165), turning from worldly knighthood to humble service in the Holy Land, returned to live as a hermit, in a hollow oak, in Houthem, though walking daily to Maastricht to pray in the St. Servaas Church and Saturdays to the Chapel of the Virgin Mary in Aachen.

6: The Epiphany may have originated in the East, together with Christmas in the West, from attempts to determine the solar-calendar dates of the Conception, Passion, and Birth of Christ, using different solar calendars. By the late Fourth-century, each was celebrated in both regions, with Christmas as the Feast of His Birth, and Epiphany as that of His “manifestation” to the Gentile Magi, at His Baptism by the Voice of His Father and the descent of the Holy Spirit in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and by His sign of turning water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana.

8 (3 June in the East): Lucian of Beauvais was a missionary martyred in Gaul, commemorated with his companions, Maximian and Julian: little is known about any of them, but a Church was built over their graves when Christianity became legally tolerated; another, with monastery, around 563 after the first was destroyed; yet another after Norman invaders destroyed the second: this third one was nationalized and destroyed as a result of the French Revolution, but some relics survive at the Church of Notre-Dame du Thil.

Also, St. Gudula (7th/8th century) who – according to her 11th-c. *Life* – was the daughter of Count Witger and St. Amalberga (c. 690: 10 July), and youngest sister of Sts. Reineld (c. 680: 16 July), Phairalde (Dutch: Veerle; c. 740: 5 Jan.), and Emebert, their brother the Bishop of Cambrai (c. 710: 15 Jan.), and god-daughter of St. Gertrude, Abbess of Nivelles (659: 17 Mar.), who brought her up there. Thereafter, she returned home, spending (in the words of Attwater) ‘all her days in religious devotion and good works for her neighbours.’ Buried at Ham, her body was first translated to nearby Moorsel, where she had gone daily to pray, and then, at the direction of Charles of Lorraine (977-92), to the Church of St. Gaugericus (French: Géry, Dutch: Gorik; c. 626: 11 Aug.) in Brussels. At the instigation of Lambert II Balderic, Count of Louvain, it was transferred within Brussels by Bishop Gerard I of Cambrai in 1047 to the St. Michael’s Church and installed in a new chapel there, in what is now the cathedral bearing both their names. Her skull was later sent to St. Hildegard of Bingen (1179: 17 Sept.) and remains to this day in the church in Eibingen where the latter is also buried – and so escaped the Protestant desecration of her grave and scattering of her relics in Brussels in 1579. Her *Life* reports that once, en route to Moorsel in the winter dark her lantern was extinguished – and relit at her prayer. And so, the Common Jellyspot fungus has the folk-name, ‘Sint Goedeles lampken’.

10: Paul of Thebes (c. 345), traditionally the first Christian hermit, visited, and buried, by St. Anthony, as can be read in St. Jerome’s *Life* of him.

12: Benedict Biscop (689): Biscop Baducing left the service of King Oswy of Bernicia in 653 intent on becoming monk, and travelled to Rome with St. Wifrid (709: 12 Oct.). On another journey to Rome, Biscop went to Lerins and became a monk indeed, taking the name ‘Benedict’ and remaining for two years. Returning to Rome in 669, he was instructed by Pope Vitalian to accompany St. Theodore (690: 19 Sept.) to Canterbury where he was to serve as Archbishop. He did, and became Abbot of St.

Peter's there for two years. Going to Rome again and returning with books and relics, he so impressed Oswy's heir, King Egfrith of Northumbria, that he endowed St. Benedict with land to build the monastery of Wearmouth in 674. In 679 he visited Rome yet again, returning with many more books and relics – and with John, archcantor of St. Peter's, who taught the monks the Roman liturgy and uncial script. In 682, with Egfrith's help, he founded the monastery of Jarrow, where the Venerable Bede (735) was one of his students. On a last trip to Rome (685), he brought back yet more books and sacred images. The year after that, he was stricken with paralysis and bedridden till his death, bearing this 'with exemplary patience and faith' (Attwater).

13: Hilary of Poitiers (c. 368), drawn by long study to Christ, was then soon made bishop there; gentle, courteous, and friendly, he was an outspoken defender of orthodoxy against the Arians, in Gaul and in exile in Phrygia. (Both men and women have been named for him since the Middle Ages.)

Also, St. Kentigern (c. 612), nicknamed 'Mungo', evangelist of Strathclyde and Cumbria, over whose grave Glasgow cathedral was built. (Now widely known as hospital patron in the Harry Potter books.)

14: Barba'shmin (346) was the nephew of St. Simeon Barsabba'e (341: 21 April), Bishop of Seleucia-Ctesiphon, who had been martyred by the Persian Zoroastrian King Shapur II. When St. Simeon's successor, St. Shahdost (342: 20 Feb.) was tortured and beheaded with many other Christians, St. Barba'shmin was elected in secret and consecrated in the house of one of the faithful. He and a number of his priests were caught, and imprisoned together in privation, and tortured, for nearly a year. He was offered wealth and a governorship if he would convert, but (in the words of a 12th-c. history) laughed at Shapur 'and said, "The more Christians you kill, the more their numbers will increase"' – and paid with his life for saying so. Attwater writes, 'After that the see was vacant for nearly forty years; thousands of Christians perished, and many fled abroad during the persecution.'

17: Anthony (356), sold all he had to follow Christ, including during 20 years of complete solitude in the Egyptian desert, though he travelled to Alexandria in 311 to encourage his fellow-Christians during the persecution by Emperor Maximinus, and in 355 to oppose the Arians.

18: Prisca, a martyr associated with the Church bearing her name on the Aventine Hill in Rome since the Fourth century: little is known about her, and the identification (since around the Ninth century) of her with St. Priscilla or Prisca (2 Timothy 4:19), wife of St. Aquila (8 July; in the East, 13 Feb.), known from the Acts of the Apostles and various letters of St. Paul, 'seems most unlikely' (in the words of Dr. Farmer).

19: Canute (1086), King of Denmark, promoted Christianity practically in his nominally Christian realm, and was murdered by rebellious earls as he prayed before the altar of St Alban's, Odensee.

Also, St. Wulfstan (1095), a Benedictine monk at Worcester who became prior and bishop there, and, while making it one of the most important centres of Old English literature and culture, also submitted to, and loyally served, William the Conqueror. He also abolished the slave trade from Bristol to Viking Ireland.

Also, St. Henry (c. 1156), patron of Finland. He was an Englishman consecrated bishop of Uppsala by Nicholas Breakspear (the later Pope Adrian IV) when papal legate in Scandinavia: accompanying King St. Eric IX (c. 1160: 18 May) on a crusade against the pagan Finns, he stayed on at Turku as a missionary and was murdered by a convert resenting punishment for another murder.

20: Fabian (250), unanimously elected Pope while a layman visiting Rome, was martyred in the persecution of the Emperor Decius. His body was later translated from the catacomb of Callistus to the Church of St Sebastian, also a martyr, and sharing the same Feast day .

21: Agnes, who had consecrated her maidenhood to God, became one of the most universally famous of early Roman martyrs. The similarity of her name to 'agnus' ('lamb ' in Latin) has led to the blessing on her Feast of lambs for wool woven into pallia for archbishops by the nuns of St. Agnes.

Also, St. Meinrad (861), who was a monk at the Benedictine Abbey of Reichenau, on an island in Lake Constance, but, in imitation of the desert fathers, went to live as a hermit – on the slopes of Mt. Etzel, at a place later named Einsiedeln ('hermitage') from that fact. He is known as the 'Martyr of Hospitality', for, after having received, fed, sheltered, and entertained two travellers, he was murdered by them – and was immediately followed by a succession of hermits, imitating his example. One of these, Eberhard, formerly Provost of Strasbourg, founded a Benedictine Abbey there in 934, in the words of Attwater, 'a great monastery and pilgrimage center that has an unbroken history of over a thousand years' – though one of its former Deans, Huldrych Zwingli, protested against the pilgrimages without success. In 1854, a colony of monks was sent to America, to work among the Indians and minister to German immigrants, and St. Meinrad's Abbey, Indiana, became the motherhouse of various daughters.

22: Vincent of Saragossa (304), deacon and proto-martyr of Spain.

25: The Conversion of St. Paul from persecutor to apostle by his meeting with the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus (of which three accounts are given in Acts: 9:1-19, 22:3-21, and 26:9-23) is commemorated with its own Feast.

26: Timothy (also 24 Jan.; in the East, 22 Jan.) and Titus (also 6 Feb.: earlier, 4 Jan.; in the East, 25 Aug.), now commemorated together in the Diocese of Gibraltar in Europe on the same date as in the new Roman Calendar. Both were companions of St. Paul, to whom he entrusted special responsibilities described in his letters to each. St. Timothy, who had a Gentile father, seems to have followed his Jewish mother in welcoming the Gospel (Acts 16:1-3). St. Titus is generally assumed to be a Gentile convert, and is venerated as first bishop of Gortyna, Crete. St. Timothy is claimed as first bishop of Ephesus in a tradition recorded by Eusebius, and Fourth-century Acts record his martyrdom for opposing a pagan festival.

Also St. Paula (404), who, happily married to the Roman Senator, Toxotius, found herself suddenly a wealthy young widow with five children – the oldest, St. Blesilla (384: 22 Jan.), married young, was soon widowed herself. Under the influence of her friend, St. Marcella (410: 31 Jan.), another widow, she led a retired, studious, but also generously charitable life as part of what Attwater calls 'a sort of religious sisterhood' St. Marcella organized. St. Marcella welcomed St. Jerome (420: 30 Sept.) on his return to Rome, and he came to guide the group in religion and learning. St. Paula, St. Blesilla, and her younger sister, St. Eustochium (c. 419; 28 Sept.) planned to accompany St. Jerome on a long pilgrimage to the Holy Land and the hermits of Egypt, but St. Blesilla died before they were ready to depart (384), to the great sorrow of all. In 385, St. Pammachius (410: 30 Aug.) married her second daughter, Paulina; and her son, Toxotius, at first a pagan, was baptized, and the journey east began. In 386, the death of her youngest daughter, Rufina, 'overcame the affectionate heart of her mother' (in the words of St. Jerome). They settled in Bethlehem, for the rest of her life, and Attwater's account deserves quoting at length: 'Paula took the lead among the women of Jerome's group, building a

communal house for them, and another for the men, as well as a hospice for pilgrims; and she took charge of Jerome's personal welfare, which she found no light undertaking. She had learned Greek from her father and now applied herself to Hebrew, so that she could sing the psalms in their original words and profit more from her biblical studies under Jerome's direction.' Toxotius married Laeta, daughter of the pagan priest, Albinus, and she corresponded with St. Jerome about the Christian education of their daughter, Paula. Attwater notes that St. Jerome warned St. Paula 'that her lavish gifts to charity would land her in difficulties, which they did: her death left Eustochium with a large debt.' St. Paula was buried beneath the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, and St. Eustochium succeeded her in caring for the company of dedicated women, aided by her niece, Paula, who succeeded her in turn.

28: Charlemagne (814), though canonized in 1165 by Paschal III – who was repudiated as an antipope, had his local veneration authorized: for example, in Aachen, Frankfurt, Basel, Zurich, and Halberstadt.

Also, St. Thomas Aquinas (1274) in the new Roman calendar (his 1369 translation date).

30: Charles I (1649): After the Restoration of the Monarchy, the commemoration of "King Charles the Martyr" was added to the *Book of Common Prayer*, and special forms of prayer for the day composed, which were used by Royal order until 1859.

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