

Saints SATURUS, SATURNINUS, SECUNDUS, REVOCATUS, PERPETUA and FELICITY, who fulfilled their martyrdom at CARTHAGE

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While the Emperor Valerian's

persecution was raging in the Roman province of Africa where Christianity was already widespread (c. 203), the young catechumens Perpetua, Revocatus, Felicity, Saturninus and Secundus were arrested in the town of Thubordo. Revocatus and Felicity were bondservants, while the twenty-two-year-old Perpetua was of noble birth. She asked to keep her child, which was still at her breast when she was arrested, and she was transferred to Carthage with the others, in spite of the efforts of her pagan father to retain her. The stifling atmosphere of the dungeon in which the Martyrs were crammed became a veritable palace for the young mother, in which she awaited the visit of Christ the King. God then revealed to her in a vision what she and her companions were to expect. She saw a narrow, bronze ladder set up on the earth and reaching to heaven. Instruments of death of all kinds were attached to its rungs and a dreadful dragon sat at its foot threatening all who would climb it. The first to mount the ladder was their catechist, Saturus, who had given himself up voluntarily in order to join them. On reaching the top, he called: Perpetua, I'm waiting for you, but take care that the dragon doesn't bite you!' 'Through the Name of Jesus Christ', she replied, it shan't do me any harm.' Then, springing forward, she crushed the dragon's head with her heel and reached the top of the ladder in a single bound, gaining entrance to the Paradise of delight in which she was welcomed by countless thousands of white-clad Martyrs.

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