

Pope Saint Innocent I

Pope Innocent I was pope from 401 to March 12, 417 during the days of Saints Jerome and Augustine. His papacy was during the time when the siege of Rome occurred by Alaric (395-410) and the Visigoths (408). This holy Pope was a vigorous administrator of the duties of his office, whereby he left his mark on Christianity for all time. It was he who condemned Palagius and Caelestius (thereby confirming the decisions of the synod of the province of proconsular Africa, held in Carthage in 416, which had been sent to him, and also writing in the same year in a similar sense to the fathers of the Numidian synod of Mileve who, Augustine being one of their number, had addressed him). He decreed against their heresy, ordering that little children, even those whose mothers were Christians, must be born again in Baptism, that their original sin might be done away.

He befriended and protected holy John Chrysostom. He wrote letters that absolution and holy Communion is never denied to dying penitents. To the Bishop of Gubbio, he wrote that bishops only because they alone have the fullness of the priesthood are to administer Confirmation. Among Innocent I's letters is one to Jerome and another to John II, Bishop of Jerusalem, regarding annoyances to which he had been subjected to by the Palagians at Bethlehem. He died on March 12, 417, and was buried in the cemetery known as the Place of the Bear-and-the-Cap, but is honored on the reputed date of his translation.

Collect

We pray thee, O Lord: that the glorious confession of thy Saints Nazarius, Celsus, Victor, and Innocent, may strengthen us against all temptations, and obtain for the frailty of our mortal nature the succor of thy bounteous goodness. Through Jesus Christ, thy Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with thee, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

*(excerpted from: www.occesussex.co.uk; www.westernorthodox.com)

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Saints Nazarius & Celsus and Saints Victor I & Innocent I

Feast Day: July 28



Saints Nazarius and Celsus



Pope Saint Victor I



Pope St. Innocent I

Saints Nazarius & Celsus, Martyrs
&
Saints Victor I & Innocent I, Popes and Martyrs

Saints Nazarius and Celsus, Martyrs

*The only historical information which we possess regarding the two martyrs Nazarius and Celsus is the discovery of their bodies by Saint Ambrose. Paulinus relates (Vita Ambrosii, xxxii-xxxiii) that Ambrose, at some time within the last three years of his life, after the death of the Emperor Theodosius (d. 395), discovered in a garden outside the walls of Milan the body of St. Nazarius, with severed head and still stained with blood, and that he caused it to be carried to the Basilica of the Apostles. In the same garden, Ambrose likewise discovered the body of St. Celus, which he caused to be transported to the same basilica. Obviously a tradition regarding these martyrs was extant in the Christian community of Milan which led to the finding of the two bodies.

Nazarius was baptized by Saint Pope Linus, and afterwards went to Gaul. Here he met a boy named Celsus, whom he instructed in the Faith, and baptized. Afterwards, both went to Treves, and in Nero's persecution, were both thrown into the sea, where they had a miraculous escape and fled to Milan, where they spread the Faith. They were both apprehended and beheaded, and buried outside the Roman Gate. There their bodies lay unknown and without honor till blessed Ambrose found them, and laid them in an honorable sepulcher in Milan.

Pope Saint Victor I

Pope Victor I was by birth an African, and governed the Church of Rome under the Emperor Severus from about 189 to 199. To his efforts it is chiefly due that the Western Church came to agreement in the celebration of the paschal feast by our present method of reckoning. The churches of Asia minor celebrated it on the 14th of the Jewish month of Nisan, the day before the Jewish Passover, regardless of what day of the week it fell on, as the crucifixion had occurred on the Friday before Passover. Rome and the West celebrated Easter on the Sunday following the 14th of Nisan. Saint Irenaeus interceded with him so as not to provoke into schism the bishops of Asia Minor. Until Victor's time, Rome celebrated the Mass in Greek. He changed the language to Latin which was used in his native North Africa. According to Jerome, Victor was the first Christian author to write theology in Latin. Latin masses however, did not become universal until the latter half of the fourth century. He is reputed to have decreed that Baptism can be administered with any water, so long as be natural. He cast out of the Church Theodosius the Tanner, who came from Constantinople, and taught that Christ was nothing but a man. He severed ties with bishops such as Polycrates of Ephesus who opposed his views on Easter. He is buried on Vatican Hill on July 28, 199, and by tradition is revered as a martyr.