

(Extracted from, "Butler's Lives of the Saints", by Fr. Alban Butler)

MAY V.

ST. PIUS V., POPE, C.

[The two original most authentic lives of St. Pius V are that wrote by Jerom Catena, secretary to the Cardinal of Alexandria, and consuler to several congregations in Rome, in Italian, highly approved by Sextus V.; the other in Latin, by Ant. Gabutio, superior of the regular clerks of St. Paul, much commended by Clement VIII. The titles of these two works are: Hieron. Catena Vita del gloriosissimo Papa Pio V.; and Raccolta di Littere di Papa Pio V. Gabutii de Vita Pii V. libri vi. Bzovias, in his annals on Pius V. adds to this latter several particulars. See his Pius V.; also Archangelo Caraccio, Brevis Narratio Gestoram Pii V., Minorelli, Ord. Praedic. Vita St. Pie V., Romae, 1712; Apostolicaram Pii Quinti Epistolarum libri v. opera Fr. Gaubau. Ant. 1649; Paul. Alex. Maffei; Vita di Pio V.; Feuillet, Vie du Pape Pie V.; Galesini Translatio Corporis Pii V. a Sixto V. celebrate; Agatio di Somme, whose Italian life of this saint was translated into French by Dom. Felibien in 1672; Touron, b. xxviii, t. iv. p. 306; and the remarks of Henschenius, ad 5 Maij, t, i. p. 617.]

A.D. 1572.

MICHAEL GHISLERI, known afterwards by the name of Pius V., was born at Bosco, a little town in the diocese of Tortona, on the 27th of January, 1504. He was descended of a noble Bolognese family, but considerably reduced in its splendour and fortunes. In his tender years the most perfect maxims of piety were instilled into him, and he never swerved in the least from those principles during the whole course of his life. He studied grammar under the care of the Dominican friars at Voghera; and giving himself up entirely to the most fervent exercises of religion, took the habit of that Order when he was only fifteen years of age. He was sensible that faint and languishing endeavours never deserve to find the inestimable treasure of true virtue, which they undervalue; they are sure to lose ground, and at length to yield under the repeated assaults of the enemy; whereas fervour breaks down all obstacles in the pursuit of perfection as so many shadows, and courageously marches on, reckoning all labours the sweetest pleasures, and esteeming as nothing whatever leads not to this great end. It was the young novice's holy ambition to surpass all others in humility, modesty, and the exercises of mortification, obedience, and devotion. In every thing he did, he set no bounds to the ardour of his desires to please God, and accomplish his holy will in the most perfect manner. Thus all his actions were perfect sacrifices of his heart, and the meanest were enhanced by the fervour of his intention. To his studies he joined assiduous prayer, watching, fasting, and the exercises of penance and charity. After the uninterrupted fatigue of the day, it was his sweet refreshment to pour forth his soul in tears and devout prayer or meditation for several hours before the altar, or in his cell. Having prepared himself by a long and fervent retreat, he was ordained priest at Genoa, in 1528. He taught philosophy and divinity sixteen years, and was long employed in instructing the novices, and in forming them to piety, and in governing different houses of his Order; in

all which offices he laboured effectually to revive the spirit of its holy founder. He never accepted of any priory but by compulsion and with tears. No one would he ever allow to absent himself from the choir, or to go out of the convent without some urgent necessity. Constant devotion and study he called the double breast from which religious persons draw a spiritual nourishment, which maintains in them the love of God and contempt of the world. Though he went often to Milan to hear the confession of the Marquis of Guast, governor of the Milanese, he could never be persuaded to buy a cloak to defend him from the rain, saying, "Poor followers of the gospel ought to be content with one tunic." His journey he performed on foot, in recollection and strict silence, unless he opened his mouth to speak to his companion something on God. Pope Paul IV., in 1556, promoted him to the united bishoprics of Nepi and Sutri, in the ecclesiastical state, notwithstanding the tears he shed in endeavouring most earnestly to decline that dignity. Under his care these diocesses assumed a new face. In 1557, he was created cardinal by the same pope, under the title of St. Mary upon the Minerva, though generally known by that of the Alexandrian cardinal, from Alexandria, a city in Lombardy, a few miles distant from the place of his birth. His dignities served to render his humility and other virtues more conspicuous, but produced no alteration in his furniture, table, fasts, or devotions. He was most scrupulously cautious in the choice of his few necessary domestics, admitting none but persons of most exemplary piety, and he treated them as his children rather than as his servants. Pope Paul IV. dying in 1559, he was succeeded by Pius IV., of the family of Medicis, who translated our good cardinal to the bishopric of Mondovi, in Piedmont, a church reduced by the wars to a deplorable and calamitous condition. The saint hastened to his new flock; and by his zealous exhortations, and other endeavours, re-established peace and union, reformed abuses, and restored the splendour of that church. But an order of his holiness recalled him to Rome, for the dispatch of certain public affairs of the church. When Pius IV. proposed to the sacred college the promotion of Prince Ferdinand of Medicis, only thirteen years old, to the dignity of cardinal, our saint opposed the motion with such vigour, that he made himself admired by the whole consistory for his zeal and prudence. The Emperor Maximilian II. wrote to Pope Pius IV. to desire that priests might be allowed to marry, as a means that might facilitate the return of the modern sectaries to the communion of the church. The whole sacred college saw the inconveniences of such an abolition of the most holy and ancient canons; but none spoke more vigorously against it than our saint. Though charity will allow all condescension that is possible, here it seemed very unseasonable, on many accounts, to abandon so sacred a spiritual law; and this in favour of men who had shown no disposition towards a reconciliation with the Catholic Church, except she would give up many other points, not only of discipline, but also of her faith and doctrine.

Pope Pius IV., after a tedious illness, expired in the arms of St. Charles Borromeus, on the 9th of December, 1565, having filled the chair almost six years. St. Charles, when he saw that the pious Cardinal Sirlet, who was first proposed, could not be chosen, united the suffrages of the conclave in favour of our saint, testifying an entire confidence in his virtue. All others applauded the choice, except the pope elect, who having in vain opposed it by tears and entreaties, at length, for

fear of resisting the call of God, gave his consent, on the 7th of January, 1566, and took the name of Pius. The largesses usually bestowed by the popes, at their coronation, on the people of Rome, he converted into alms, to avoid the disorders of intemperance, &c., to which they are liable. He accordingly directed the sums usually expended on such occasions, to be distributed among the poor in the hospitals and elsewhere. He in like manner sent to the poorer convents in the city the thousand crowns usually employed in an entertainment for the cardinals, ambassadors, and lords who assisted at the ceremony. His first care was to regulate his family in such a manner that it might be a model of virtue, and he induced the cardinals to do the like in their respective houses. He forbade the public exhibition of the sights of wild beasts, as savouring too much of inhumanity, and published very severe regulations against excesses in taverns, and against detraction committed in public assemblies, and re-established a strict observance and execution of the laws. By rigorous edicts, he banished numbers of lewd women under pain of corporal punishment, if found afterwards within the city; others he confined to an obscure part of Rome, under the same penalty if they were seen elsewhere. He said mass every day (and usually with tears), unless hindered by sickness ; he made daily two meditations on his knees before a crucifix, and called prayer the comfort and support of a pastor amidst the hurry of affairs. His tenderness for the poor, and his charities, are not to be expressed; but nothing appeared more admirable in him than his sincere and profound humility. An English Protestant gentleman was converted, by seeing the condescension and affection with which he kissed the ulcers of the feet of a certain poor man. His rigorous fasts and abstemiousness he would scarce ever mitigate, even on account of sickness. He published the catechism, and the decrees of the Council of Trent, which he laboured strenuously to carry into immediate execution; and made many other useful regulations, extending his solicitude to every part of Christendom, particularly the eastern missions. He generously assisted the knights of Malta, when they were besieged by the most formidable armies of the Turks, and by his liberalities enabled them to repair their breaches after their victories, and to build the new impregnable city of Valette, in 1566. The rebellion raised in France under Charles IX. obliged him to exert his vigilance in protecting the city and territory of Avignon against the stratagems of Coligny. He purged the ecclesiastical state of assassins and robbers, but rejected the perfidious proposal of one who offered to invite the chief captain of the robbers to dinner, and then to deliver him up. His severity, which was necessary for the public tranquillity, did not make him forget that mercy, wherever it can be allowed to take place, is to be the favourite inclination of a disciple of Christ. A certain Spaniard had composed a bitter and seditious pasquinade, filled with notorious slanders against his holiness, for which the magistrate had confiscated his estate, and condemned him to death; but the pope granted him a free pardon, with this mild request, that when he should see him fall into any fault, he would admonish him of it. By a bull dated the 1st of October, 1567, he condemned several erroneous propositions ascribed to Michael Baius of Lovain, some of which that doctor denied to have been advanced by him, others he with great humility retracted. To recompense the zeal of Cosmus de Medicis, Duke of Florence, he granted him by a bull the title of Grand Duke, and crowned him as such at Rome in 1569, though the emperor refused for some time to acknowledge that new title. By a great number of wise

regulations he endeavoured to extirpate various scandals and abuses; in a brief, by which he strongly enforces the canons relating to the respect due to holy places, amongst other things, he forbids any either to give or ask an alms in churches, but only at the doors; which is commanded by several councils to prevent an occasion of distractions and an abuse contrary to the silence and respect due to the house of prayer. Certain privileges granted to particular confraternities, seem to have given occasion in some places to too great a neglect of these wholesome and necessary canons.

Notwithstanding his attention to the public affairs, the good pope did not forget that the exercises of an interior life are the means by which our souls must maintain and improve the spirit of holy charity, and by it sanctify our exterior actions. Prayer and holy meditation were his delight; for he well knew that the fire of charity will soon be extinguished in the heart unless it be continually nourished by new fuel. St. Pius joined to prayer assiduous mortification, and large alms. He often visited the hospitals, washed the feet of the poor, kissed their ulcers, comforted them in their sufferings, and disposed them for a Christian death. He gave twenty thousand crowns of gold to the hospital of the Holy Ghost, and great and frequent charities to other hospitals; he founded a distribution of dowries for the marriage of poor women, and made many most useful pious foundations to perpetuate the honour of God and the salvation of souls, particularly in the instruction of youth in the Christian doctrine, which he earnestly recommended to all pastors by an express bull, in 1571. In the time of a great famine in Rome, he imported corn at his own expense from Sicily and France, to the value of above one hundred thousand gold crowns; a considerable part of which he distributed among the poor, gratis, and sold the rest to the public much under prime cost. Frugal in all things as regarded himself, he was enabled by his good economy to make many useful foundations for promoting virtue and religion, and to relieve the distressed by incredible general alms-deeds and public benefactions, exclusively of the large daily demands which particular charities made upon him. He was a great encourager of learning and learned men; and to him the schools are indebted for the most accurate edition of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, which appeared in 1570. He wrote to Queen Mary Stuart, in 1570, to comfort her during her long imprisonment suffered for religion.

Selimus II., Emperor of the Turks, pursuing the ambitious and boundless designs of his father Solyman, proposed nothing less to himself than to overrun all Christendom with his arms, and to add all the western kingdoms to his empire, though he was himself an effeminate tyrant, enervated by drunkenness and debaucheries, he was long successful in his wars, by the conduct of veteran soldiers and experienced generals, who had been trained up by his warlike father. Flushed with victories and elated with pride, when Italy was afflicted with a famine, and the great arsenal of Venice had been lately almost entirely destroyed by a dreadful fire, he haughtily demanded of that republic the peaceable surrender of the isle of Cyprus, by way of satisfaction for pretended injuries; though in reality for the sake of its excellent wine, with which liquor he was extremely besotted, though forbidden by the Koran, threatening that in case of refusal he would force it from them. Having all things in readiness beforehand, the infidels immediately invaded the island, took

Nicosia by storm, in 1570, after a siege of forty-eight days, and in 1571, Famagusta by capitulation, after having battered that city with above one million, five hundred thousand cannon-shot, during a siege of seventy-five days. Notwithstanding the articles of an honourable capitulation had been ratified by the most solemn oaths, the Bashaw Mustapha, by an unheard of treacherous perfidy, put to most cruel deaths all the brave Venetian officers of the place; and caused the valiant Venetian governor, Brigadin, after cutting off his ears and nose, with a thousand insults, blasphemies, and torments continued or repeated for many days, to be flayed alive in the market-place; all of which he suffered with admirable patience, and in great sentiments of piety, expiring when his skin was torn off to his waist. Alarmed at the danger which threatened all Christendom, St. Pius entered into a league with Philip II, King of Spain, and the Venetians, in order to check the progress of the Mahometans; the other Christian princes excusing themselves from acceding to it, on account of domestic broils. This alliance was ratified in May, 1571; and to avoid occasions of dissension among the princes that were engaged, the pope was declared chief of the league and expedition, who appointed Mark Antony Colonna general of his galleys, and Don John of Austria generalissimo of all the forces. The army consisted of twenty thousand good soldiers, besides seamen; and the fleet of one hundred and one great galleys, some tall ships, and a considerable number of galliots and small vessels. The pope, together with his apostolic benediction, sent to the general a prediction of certain victory, with an order to disband all soldiers who seemed to go only for the sake of plunder, and all scandalous and riotous persons, whose crimes might draw down the divine indignation upon their arms.

The Christians sailed directly from Corfu, and found the Turkish fleet at anchor in the harbour of Lepanto. As soon as the Turks saw the Christian fleet so near, they reinforced their troops from the land, and sailed out in order of battle. Don John kept the centre, and had for seconds, Colonna and the Venetian general, Venieri; Andrew Doria commanded the right wing, and Austin Barbarigo the left. Peter Justiniani, who commanded the galleys of Malta, and Paul Jourdain were posted at the extremities of the line. The Marquess of Saints Croix had a body of reserve of sixty vessels ready to sustain or relieve any part in danger of being overpowered. John of Cordova, with a squadron of eight vessels, scoured before, to spy and give intelligence; and six Venetian galleasses formed an avant-guard to the fleet. A little after sunrise the Turkish fleet, consisting of three hundred and thirty sail of all sorts, appeared in sight, almost in the same order of battle, only, according to their custom, in form of a crescent. They had no squadron of reserve, and therefore their line being much wider, they far outfronted the Christians, which is a great advantage in battle. Hali was in the centre, facing Don John of Austria; Petauch was his second; Louchali and Siroch commanded the two wings, against Doria and Barbarigo. Don John gave the signal of battle, by hanging out the banner sent him from the pope, on which the image of Christ crucified was embroidered. The Christian generals harangued their soldiers in few words, then made a sign for prayers; at which the soldiers fell on their knees before a crucifix, and continued in that posture in fervent prayer till the fleets drew near to each other, when at a second signal the battle began. The Turks bore down with great rapidity on the Christians, being assisted by a brisk gale of

wind, which promised them the greatest advantage possible, especially as they were superior in numbers, and in the extent of their front. But the wind, which before was very strong, fell just as the fight began, was succeeded by a calm, and this soon after by a high wind, entirely favourable to the Christians; which carried the smoke and fire of their artillery upon the enemy, almost blinded them, and at length quite bore them down. The battle was most obstinate and bloody, and the victory the most complete that ever was gained over the Ottoman empire. After three hours' fight, with equal advantage, the left wing, commanded by Barbarigo, got the better, and sunk the galley which Siroch was in, who had fought to admiration. His loss so dispirited his squadron, that, being rigorously pressed by the Venetians, it gave way, and made towards the coast. Don John, seeing this advantage of his right wing, was animated with new courage, doubled his fire, and killed Hali, the Turkish general, boarded his galley, pulled down his flag, and cried, Victory; after which it was no longer a fight, but a perfect slaughter in the centre; the Turks suffering themselves to be killed without making any resistance. Louchali, indeed, by his numbers and wider front, kept Doria and the right wing at a distance, till the Marquess of Sainte Croix coming up to join him, the Turk made all the sail he could, and escaped by flight, with thirty galleys, all the rest being either taken or sunk.(1) This battle was fought on the 7th of October, 1571, and continued from about six in the morning till evening, when the approaching darkness and the roughness of the sea obliged the Christians to betake themselves to the next havens. The Turks, with their haughty emperor, were seized with the utmost consternation at the news of their dreadful overthrow; and the city of Constantinople was as much alarmed as if the enemy had been at the gates; many of the inhabitants carried their treasures to the Christians to keep for them, as if the town had been already in their hands. The infidels, who, elated by their rapid conquests in the East, had already swallowed up, in their imagination, Italy, and all the rest of Christendom, were taught by this defeat that the tide of their victories was stemmed. God, who has set bounds to the raging billows of the sea, and who weighs in his hand the globe of the universe as a grain of sand, fixes limits to states and empires, and governs their revolutions. By abandoning many flourishing nations to the infidels, he has given a terrible instance of his justice, by which he admonishes others whom he has hitherto spared, though perhaps more guilty, to fear his anger, and by sincere repentance to sue for mercy, whilst it is yet offered to them. It is owing to this clemency towards the remaining part of Christendom, that he bridled the fury of these most fierce and barbarous infidels, in the very height of their pride and prosperity. From that time the Turks have gradually weakened themselves by their own domestic policy, and have at present reason to dread the arms of those Christian powers, to whom their very name was formerly a terror. In the battle at Lepanto, the infidels lost thirty thousand men, with their general, Hali, and above two hundred ships and galleys, besides ninety that were stranded, burnt, or sunk. There were taken one hundred and sixteen pieces of great cannon, two hundred and fifty-six smaller, and five thousand prisoners, with a great number of officers of rank, among whom were two sons of Hali, nephews to the grand signior. The booty was exceeding great; for the Turkish fleet was laden with the plunder of many merchantmen, and of several islands; fifteen thousand

slaves, that were found chained on board their galleys were set at liberty.

(1) See Gratiani's History of Cyprus

The holy pope, from the beginning of the expedition, had ordered public prayers and fasts, and had not ceased to solicit heaven, with uplifted hands, like Moses on the mountain, besides afflicting his body by watching and fasting. At the hour of the battle, the procession of the Rosary, in the church at the Minerva, was pouring forth solemn prayers for the victory. The pope was then conversing with some cardinals on business; but, on a sudden, left them abruptly, opened the window, stood some time with his eyes fixed on the heavens, and then shutting the casement, said, "It is not now a time to talk any more upon business; but to give thanks to God for the victory he has granted to the arms of the Christians." This fact was carefully attested, and authentically recorded both at that time, and again in the process of the saint's canonization.(2) In consequence of this miraculous victory, the pope ordered the festival of the Rosary to be kept on the first Sunday of October, in perpetual thanksgiving to God, and in the litany of our Lady inserted those words, "succour of Christians." He caused a triumph to be decreed Don John, which was graced with many illustrious prisoners; and he bestowed honours and gratifications on other generals and officers. The year following he was preparing to pursue the advantage gained by this great victory, when he died of the stone, on the 1st of May, 1572, being sixty-eight years, three months, and fifteen days old, having governed the church six years and almost four months. He had suffered from January the sharpest pains with heroic patience. He was beatified by Clement X. in 1672, and canonized by Clement XI. in 1712. His precious remains lie in the church of St. Mary Major. Many miracles are recorded by Gabutius. Henschenius has added a relation of many others approved by the auditors of the Rota under Urban VIII. in 1629.(3)

(2) See Card. Lambertini, afterwards Benedict XIV., Beatif. And Cononiz. Sanctor. t. i. p. 524.

(3) Bolland. T. i. Maij. Pp. 714, 719.

The greatest danger in a public elevated station is, as Bt. Bernard pathetically put his disciple, whom he saw raised to the popedom, in mind of, lest, in the hurry of external concerns, we should forget to give sufficient attention to those of our own souls, and lose ourselves in the wilderness or tumult of distracting thoughts and employments. But those who have their whole time at their own disposal, yet have their eyes always abroad, and live, as it were, without themselves, are truly foolish. Every one's first and principal business is included within himself, in his own heart. It is so deep that we shall always find in it exercise enough, and shall never be able to sound it; only He, who tries the thoughts and reins, can thoroughly know it. What have we to do to concern ourselves so much with the wars of states, and the quarrels of private persons? But it is infinitely both our duty and our interest to take cognizance of the contests between the flesh and the spirit within our own breasts, to appease this intestine war, by teaching the flesh to be in subjection, placing reason on its throne, and making God reign sovereignly in our hearts. It is not so slight a task as men generally

seem to imagine, to keep our domestic kingdom in good order, and to govern wisely and holily those numerous people which are contained in this little state, that is to say, that multitude of affections, thoughts, opinions, and passions, which easily raise tumults in our hearts. Those who are charged with the care of others, are obliged to reserve to themselves leisure for pious meditation, prayer, and self-examination, and diligently to watch over their own souls. "He who is bad to himself, to whom will he be good?" (Eccl. xiv. 5)