

BEGINNETH OF ST. MARCIAL

Caxton added this life to his edition of the Golden Legend, but it was not a part of Voragine's original.

In the time that our Lord Jesu Christ preached in Jewry, in the lineage of Benjamin, much people came to him for to have that was necessary to them, as well of drink as of meat, and in especial for to hear and understand such things as touched the salvation of the soul.

THE CONVERSION OF ST. MARCIAL

On a day, in the midst of all the company, came a man that was of the said lineage of Benjamin, the most noble of all the Jews, named by his right name Marcial, and his wife was called Elizabeth, which had between them both a child of the age of fifteen years, that was named also Marcial. When they heard our Lord Jesu Christ preach, which said in his predication, “Do ye penance, the realm of heaven is nigh to them that do penance, and who that is not regenerate in water by the sacrament of baptism he may not enter into the realm of heaven,” then by the commandment of our Lord Jesu Christ Marcial, his wife, and their son Marcial, which was a child replenished in holy doctrine, were baptized of St. Peter.

Then Zaccheus and Joseph, the which buried our Lord, were baptized also, and many other of the people of the Jews, which were over long to tell here all their names.

HE TRAVELS WITH ST. PETER

When all this was accomplished, and that every each turned homeward to his house, the child Marcial returned not with his father and mother, but gave himself all over to our Lord Jesu Christ, and put him in the company as one of his disciples, and held him always by St. Peter, which was right nigh of his kin, and from then forthon he was so enlumined and endoctrined of our Lord and of St. Peter that he nothing desired so much as for to accomplish commandments solitarie.

After this St. Peter came to Rome, and prayed to Marcial that he would go with him, and thus as they had been together endoctrined with one holy doctrine, and of one meritorious dilection [love], in like wise that together they receive the common reward of the joy perdurable [eternal]. And thus as they went they were accompanied of some disciples of Antioch, among whom were Alphinian and Austridiman, and many other.

When they were entered within Rome, they were received of a man named Marcel, at that time consul of the Romans. Thus as they dwelled there God appeared to St. Peter, and commanded him that he should send St. Marcial into the provinces of Gaul for to preach the faith and the belief to the people which were in the bonds of the devil of hell. Then St. Peter called to him St. Marcial and told him all by order that our Lord had said and commanded him. When St.

Marcial heard that, he began strongly to weep, because he doubted [feared] the far region, and the people which had no knowledge of God.

When St. Peter saw him thus weep he began much sweetly to comfort him in saying to him: My holy brother, be not heavy ne sorrowful, for God shall be always with thee like as he hath promised to us saying, “Lo! I am always and shall be with you unto the consummation of the world.” Thus, my sweet brother, he commanded us after his resurrection saying, “Go ye unto and through the universal world and preach the gospel to all creatures, that who shall believe and shall be baptized he shall be saved, and they that will not do so shall be damned.” Which things, my blessed brother, behoveth us to keep and put in effect, to the end that we forget not the commandments of God. Anon after these blessed words St. Marcial took leave of St. Peter, and brought with him the two disciples aforesaid; that is to wit Alphinian and Austridian and departed like as God had commanded to St. Peter.

HIS MISSION TO GAUL

Thus then as they went, and that they were weary and sore travelled by the way, which was long and grievous, St. Austridian departed out of this world and died. When St. Marcial saw that he was dead he returned in great haste to Rome, and told to St. Peter that which was befallen in their way. When St. Peter had heard him he said: Return as hastily as thou mayest, and take my bourdon [pilgrim’s staff] in thy hand, and thou shalt come where thou hast left thy brother, touch his body with this bourdon and anon he shall arise and go in thy company as he did tofore.

When St. Marcial came again to the corpse he touched it with the bourdon like as St. Peter bade him, and anon he was raised from death to life.

ST. MARCIAL EXORCISES A DEMON

After, when St. Marcial had journeyed long by divers countries in long preaching and sowing the word of God, they came in to Guienne unto a castle called Tulle and there were received of a rich and a mighty man named Arnold, which had a daughter that daily was tormented with the enemy. Thus as St. Marcial entered into the house the fiend began to cry, saying: I know well now that I must issue out of the body of this maid, for the angels of paradise that be with thee, Marcial, torment me right grievously; but I pray thee by the name of him that was crucified, whom thou preachest of, that thou send me not into the abysm of hell.

Then St. Marcial said to him: I conjure thee in the name of Jesu Christ that was crucified for us, that thou issue out of the body of this maid, and never return again, but that thou go unto a place desert where bird, ne fowl, ne person dwelleth. With this commandment the maid cast out the enemy and she fell down as dead. Then St. Marcial took her by the hand and raised her up and delivered her to her father, whole and safe.

HE RAISES A CHILD MURDERED BY A FIEND

Holiness and benignity, with all humility, shone in St. Marcial, and he was always in prayers. Another miracle also our Lord showed by the prayers of St. Marcial in the same place. The prince of the said castle, which was called Nerva, and was cousin to the emperor Nero, had a daughter which was suffocated and murdered by the fiend, and was dead. Then the father and mother of the child, that were much sorrowful and heavy, with a great part of the people, brought the body of the child tofore St. Marcial, tenderly weeping, and saying to him: O man of God, help us at this time, thou seest how it is with us.

When St. Marcial saw the lamentation and the sorrow that they made, he had pity on them, and said with an high voice: I pray you all, as well Christians as paynims, that ye will devoutly pray God Almighty that by his benign grace it please him to give again the life to this child.

The two disciples of St. Marcial, and a few of Christian people that were there, put them to prayers, and sith [after that] St. Marcial himself made his prayer, saying: Sire, I pray thee in the name of thy blessed dear Son and of thy good friend St. Peter, by the ordinance and commandment of whom I am come hither, that it please thee to raise this child here: to the end that when she shall be raised many may believe in thine holy and precious name.

Then St. Marcial, trusting in the help of God, took the child by the hand, saying to her: In the name of our Lord Jesu Christ, that of [by] the Jews for us was crucified, and the third day rose from death to life, arise up and stand right on thy feet.

Anon [Immediately] the child arose right upon her feet, and sith [thereupon] kneeled down to the feet of the holy man, saying to him: O man of God, I require thee to baptize me to the end that I may be saved, and mark me with the sign of the holy cross, for otherwise may none be saved but if he be baptized.

Anon, St. Marcial baptized him and with him in the same place were well christened also, as well men as women three thousand and six hundred.

And after this, St. Marcial went and destroyed the idols and brought them to nought. From thence went St. Marcial and his two disciples, and departed and came to Limoges, where they were benignly received of a matron that was named Susanna, in whose presence Marcial healed one that was frenatic. When the good woman Susanna saw the miracle that so was made in her presence, anon she and her meiny were baptized.

ST. MARCIAL IN PRISON

After this St. Marcial went into the temple where the priests of the idols were, the which beat him grievously, and sith put him in prison. On the morn, as he made his prayer, there descended a light so great upon him that men might not behold him, the chains of iron burst, and the doors of the prison opened, the keepers and they that were there required [asked] to be baptized, and the priests that had so beaten him were smitten to death by thunder and lightning.

Then the others that were there came to St. Marcial, in to the prison, and prayed him that he would raise them that so were smitten to death by the thunder, promising to him that if he so did they all would be baptized. Then our Lord by his prayer raised them again from death to life. Then that same time were turned to Christian faith and baptized twelve thousand creatures, as well men as women.

CHASTE VALERIEENNE AND THE CONVERSION OF DUKE STEVEN

And after this, on a time died the holy woman Susanna, and tofore her death she recommended to St. Marcial her daughter, that was called Valerienne, which had promised and avowed to our Lord chastity as long as she lived, and gave away all her riches to poor folk for the love of God. After, when the holy maid knew that there should come to Limoges a lord named Steven, which was lord of all the province from the river of Rhone unto the sea, she was sore afraid lest he would do to her any grief or noyance against her vow. When the said Steven was come to Limoges, he made to do come tofore him the holy maid [i.e., ordered that she be brought before him], to the end to have his will of her. But when she was come and he saw that she would not consent to do his will, anon he made her head to be smitten off.

Then the squire that beheaded her heard the angels sing, that bare the soul of the holy virgin into heaven, with much great joy and solemnity, and anon he returned unto his master and told him all that he had seen and heard, and sith fell down dead at his feet. Then the duke and all his company had much great dread, and the duke himself clad him next his flesh in a sharp hair [hairshirt] and hard, for great repentance, and prayed St. Marcial that he would pray God that it might please him to raise his squire from death to life, and he would believe in the faith of Jesu Christ and be christened.

Anon after that St. Marcial had prayed, our Lord raised the squire. Then the duke and well fifteen thousand persons in his company were baptized.

In this time the same duke by the commandment of the emperor Nero went in to Italy with a great company of men of arms. When he had accomplished the commandment of Nero, they went to Rome for to see St. Peter, whom they found preaching to the people, which people were barefoot and had clothed them with the hair, lying on the ground tofore St. Peter in demanding him pardon of their sins.

When St. Peter saw the duke and so much fair people in his company, he demanded them what they were, and of what country. Then the duke told him by order how he and his company had been converted and baptized of St. Marcial.

THE DEAD CHILD AND THE DEMONS

After, when they were departed from Rome, they thought that they would go see St. Marcial tofore ere they returned in to their country. Thus then as they were lodged nigh by a river, and the son of the Earl of Poitiers bained him [bathed] in the said river, the enemy the devil drowned and smothered him to the death.

When his father knew it he went weeping tenderly to St. Marcial, and prayed him to raise his son from death to life. Then St. Marcial went to the place where he was drowned and commanded the fiend to bring the body out of the water, and that he should appear in a likeness visible tofore them all.

Anon issued out of the water three fiends, like Ethiopians, more black than coals, and had terrible feet and eyes, and great hair that covered all the body, and cast out at their mouths and nostrils fire like sulphur, and cried like ravens. When they had told to St. Marcial the harms and evils that they had done, he commanded them that they should depart and go into places desert, whereas they might never noy [harm] ne grieve persons living.

St. Marcial, which had pity and compassion on them that wept for the dead child raised him from death to life, and then the child told, tofore them all that were there, how the fiend had drowned and smothered him, and how they would have bounden him with chains of iron burning, but an angel of heaven delivered him, and showed him the fire of purgatory, and from thence led him to the gate of Paradise, and as the fiends required [asked] to have him, a voice came from heaven and commanded that he should arise again, and that he should live yet twenty-six years.

When he had told him all this he gave himself all over to St. Marcial, and from then forthon lived in great abstinence and holy life, like as the angel had taught him.

THE HUSBAND SICK OF PALSY

St. Marcial did many miracles and virtues. There was in that time a woman that had an husband sick of the palsy, to which woman St. Marcial delivered his bourdon, with which she touched a little her husband, and incontinent [immediately] he was whole. Another time the fire was so great in the city of Bordeaux that all was on a flame. St. Marcial held up his bourdon against the fire and anon it was quenched.

THE MARRIED COUPLE VEXED BY DEMONS

Another time, as he would have hallowed a church at Limoges, the prince aforesaid conveyed and summoned all the people, poor and rich, to come to the dedication of this church, and when they were all assembled, St. Marcial admonished and warned them to be in very chastity. It happed among them whilst the mass was on saying that there was a knight, which he and his wife were sore vexed and troubled with fiends, and as they were brought tofore St. Marcial, he demanded of the fiends why they vexed them so, and they answered to him: Thou hast commanded them that the people maintain chastity, and these two have all night exposed them in lechery, and this is the cause that wherefore we be entered into them.

St. Marcial, at the request of the prince and people, healed them.

THE DEATH OF ST. MARCIAL

This same year, that is to say the fortieth year after the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ, the same, our Lord Jesu Christ, appeared to him and showed how that hastily he should depart from this world, and be with his other friends in the realm of heaven. Then he did do assemble [arranged to be assembled] all the Christian people that he had converted, and to them made a much sweet sermon in taking leave of them. Soon after he was sick of the fevers, and then our Lord appeared to him with a great quantity of angels, which with much joy and gladness bare the soul of St. Marcial into heaven, *Ubi est honor et gloria in secula seculorum, Amen* [where there is honor and glory for ever and ever, Amen].

HIS ROLE IN SCRIPTURE

This St. Marcial of whom we speak here was the same child, as some say, on whom our Lord laid his hand upon his head, when the contention and strife was among the apostles which of them should be greatest in the realm of heaven,¹ and then our Lord set the child Marcial in the midst of them, laying his hand upon his head, as said is, and said to them: If ye be not little and humble as this child is, ye shall not enter into heaven; he that shall be least among you he shall be greatest in my realm, as the gospel maketh more plain mention.

The which glorious St. Marcial let us pray unto, that he procure unto our Lord Jesu Christ, that all we may have part with him in the joy and glory perdurable [eternal]. Amen.

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

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

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¹ Matthew 18:1-4.

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