

HERE FOLLOWETH OF ST. URBAN

Caxton includes this life in his edition of the Golden Legend, but it is not in Ryan's translation.

St. Urban was pope after St. Calixtus, and the Christian people were in his time in over great persecution, but the mother of the emperor, whom Origen had converted, prayed so much her son that he left the Christian people in peace. Nevertheless there was one, Almachius, provost of Rome, and was their principal governour of the city, and he had cruelly smitten off the head of St. Cecilia.

This man was marvellously cruel against Christian men, and did diligently enquire where St. Urban was, and by one of his servants, named Carpasius, he was found in a dark place and a secret with three priests and three deacons. He commanded to put him in prison, and after, he did him to be brought tofore him and accused him that he had deceived five thousand people with St. Cecilia, and the noble men Tiburtius and Valerian, and made all them do sacrilege, and above this he demanded him the treasure of St. Cecilia and of the church.

To whom Urban said: I see now that covetise moveth thee more to persecute the Christian men than doth the sacrifice of thy gods; the treasure of St. Cecilia is ascended into heaven by the hands of poor people.

Then did he do beat St. Urban [Almachius had St. Urban beaten] with plummetts [lead weights] and also his fellows with him, and he praised the name of god Elyon, and the tyrant smiling said: This old fellow would be reputed wise, for he speaketh and saith words that he understandeth not.

And when he saw that he might not overcome him, he commanded him and sent him to prison again, whereas St. Urban converted three captains of the town with the keeper of the prison, which was named Anolinus, and baptized them.

When the tyrant heard that Anolinus was become Christian, he did do bring him [had him brought] tofore him, and because he would do no sacrifice to his gods he did do smite off his head.

And when St. Urban and his fellows were brought tofore the idols, to the end that they should sacrifice and cense tofore the gods, St. Urban began to make his orison to God; and anon the idol fell down and slew twenty-two priests of the law that held fire for to make sacrifice.

Then were they beaten cruelly, and after brought for to make sacrifice, and then they spit in the idol and after made the sign of the cross in their foreheads, and kissed each other, and received capital sentence, that is to say they were beheaded, and so suffered death under Alexander the emperor, which began to reign the year of our Lord two hundred and twenty.

And anon after Carpasius was taken of the fiend in blaspheming his gods and in magnifying the Christian men against his will, he was strangled of the fiend, which thing his wife seeing, called Armenia, with her daughter Lucina and all her household received baptism of St. Fortunatus, priest. And after that the bodies of the saints were right honorably buried.

Urbanus is said of urbanity, that is courtesy, or it is said of ur, that is to say fire or light and banal, that is to say response or answer. He was light by honest conversation, fire by charity, and answer by doctrine. Or he was light, for the light is good to behold, and it is immaterial in essence, in setting celestial, and profitable in working. And thus this saint was amiable in conversation, celestial in love of God, and profitable in predication.

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

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

Scanned by Robert Blackmon. bob_blackmon@mindspring.com.

This text was taken from the [Internet Medieval Source Book](#). The Sourcebook is a collection of public domain and copy-permitted texts related to medieval and Byzantine history.

Permission is granted for electronic copying, distribution in print form for educational purposes and personal use. If you do reduplicate the document, indicate the source. No permission is granted for commercial use.

E-text © Paul Halsall, September 2000
halsall@fordham.edu

Reformatted with paragraphs, rubrics, italics, and explanatory insertions by Richard Stracke, rstracke@aug.edu