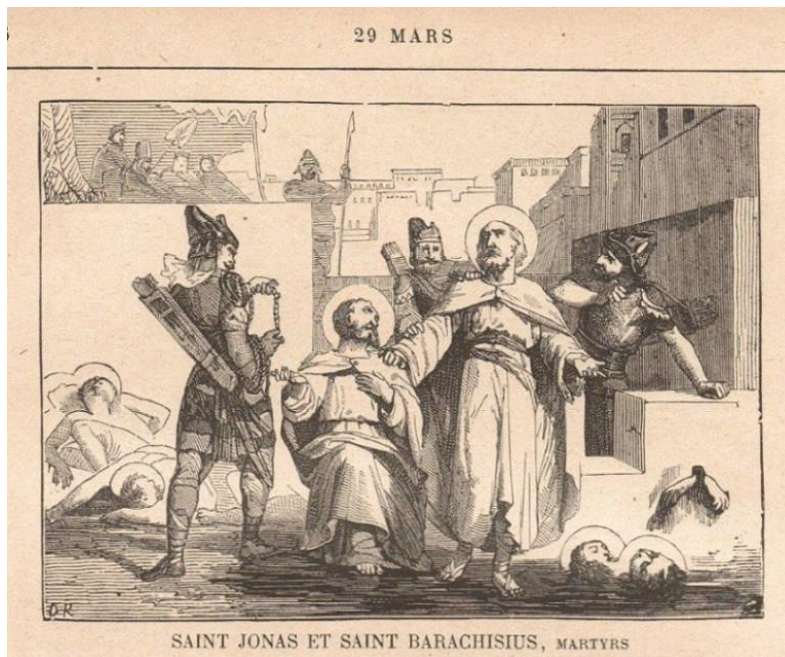


St. Jonas and St. Barachisius and their Companions



King Sapor of Persia, in the year 327, the eighteenth of his reign, raised a bloody persecution against the Christians and laid waste their churches and monasteries. Jonas and Barachisius, two brothers of the city Beth-Asa, hearing that several Christians were under sentence of death at Hubaham, went there to encourage and serve them. Fear not, brothers, but let us combat for the name of Jesus crucified, and like our predecessors we shall obtain the glorious crown promised to valiant soldiers of the Faith. Fortified by these words, nine of that number received the crown of martyrdom.

After their execution, Jonas and Barachisius were apprehended for having exhorted the martyrs to die. The president entreated the two brothers to obey the king of Persia, and to worship the sun, the moon, fire, and water. They answered that it was more reasonable to obey the immortal King of heaven and earth than a mortal prince. Saint Jonas was beaten with knotty clubs and with rods until his ribs were visible, but he blessed God. Then he was chained by one foot and dragged to a frozen pond to spend the night there.

Saint Barachisius had two red-hot iron plates and two red-hot hammers applied under each arm, and melted lead dropped into his nostrils and eyes; after which he was carried to prison, and there hung up by one foot. Despite these cruel tortures, the two brothers survived and remained steadfast in the Faith. New and more horrible torments were then devised; both finally expired under a terrible press. They yielded up their heroic lives, praying for their enemies, while their pure souls winged their flight to heaven, there to gain the martyr's crown which they had so faithfully won.