St. Paternus

Born: 482 AD

Died: 565 AD

Feast: April 15

Saint Paternus was born at Poitiers, of illustrious Christian parents, about the year 482. His father, Patranus, with the consent of his wife went to Ireland to end his days as a hermit in holy solitude. Paternus, fired by his father's example, embraced monastic life in the Abbey of Marnes, France. After some time, desiring to attain the perfection of Christian virtue by a life of penance in solitude, he retired with a companion monk of the Abbey, Saint Scubilion, and in the forests of the diocese of Coutances near the sea, embraced an austere anchorite's life resembling that of Angels more than of men. An abbot of that region who knew of him recommended Paternus to the bishop of Coutances, who ordained him a deacon and then a priest in 512. He and Saint Scubilion then evangelized the western coasts and established several monasteries, of which he was the abbot general. Many miracles honored his apostolate among the pagan populations.

In his old age he was consecrated bishop of Avranches while his former companion, Saint Scubilion, had become abbot of a monastery founded by the two missionaries. When Saint Paternus fell ill he felt his end was near, and he sent to his dear friend to come and assist him in his last illness. But the same fate had befallen Scubilion, who for his part had sent a messenger to Paternus. The two hermit-missionaries, each of whom had become the spiritual father of many, departed this life on the same day, April 16, 565, the thirteenth year of the pontificate of Saint Paternus. They were afterwards buried on the same day in the church of the monastery of Scicy, a region they had evangelized together.

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