

**PASSION OF THE MARTYRS SAINT FRUCTUOSUS, BISHOP, AUGURIUS AND EULOGIUS, DEACONS, IMMOLATED IN TARRAGONA ON THE 21<sup>ST</sup> OF JANUARY UNDER THE EMPIRE OF VALERIANUS AND GALLIENUS**

1.- During the consulate of Aemilianus and Bassus, on Sunday, the 16th of January, Fructuosus, bishop, Augurius and Eulogius, deacons, were arrested. They were in the room of Fructuosos when into his house came the soldiers of the pretorium and the officers of the pretorium Aurelius, Festucius, Aelius, Pollentius, Donatus and Maximus. He heard footsteps, got up and welcomed them, still in sandals.

The soldiers said:

- Come with us, the governor summons you and your deacons.

Fructuosus replied:

- I will but let me put my shoes on.

The soldiers replied:

- Put them on, if you want to.

When they arrived they were immediately imprisoned. Fructuosus, however, confident and happy, for the Lord's sanctity to which he was destined, prayed without weakening. The brothers did not leave him alone while giving him food and begged him to keep them in his thoughts.

2.- The day after, he baptized our brother named Rogatianum. They were there for 6 days until they were taken out, on Friday the 21st of January, to make a statement. The governor Aemilianus said:

- Show Fructuosus in, show Augurius in, show Eulogius in.

The soldiers answered:

- Here they are!

Governor Aemilianus said to Fructuosus:

- Do you know what the emperors have ordered?

Fructuosus answered:

- This I ignore since I am a Christian.

Governor Aemilianus said:

- They have ordered you to adore our Gods.

Fructuosus retorted:

- I adore the only Lord, creator of earth, heaven and the sea, and everything that exists.

Aemilianus insisted:

- Don't you know that there are gods?

Fructuosus said:

- I don't know it.

Aemilianus threatened:

- You will know it later.

Fructuosus looked at God and began to pray in silence. The governor Aemilianus exclaimed:

- These are the ones you pay attention to, these are the feared ones, these are the ones adored, instead of worshiping and adoring the emperors' statues!

Governor Aemilianus said to Augurius:

- Ignore Fructuosus words.

Augurius said :

-I adore the Almighty.

The governor spoke to Eulogius:

-Maybe you adore Fructuosus?

Eulogius explained:

- I don't adore Fructuosus but I do adore the same God he adores!

Governor Aemilianus spoke to Fructuosus:

-Are you a bishop?

Fructuosus said:

-I am!

Aemilianus sentenced:

- You were!

And ordered them to be burnt alive.

3.- While Fructuosus and his deacons were taken to the amphitheatre, people started to feel sorry for Bishop Fructuosus because they loved him so much, and not only his brothers but also the heathens. Fructuosus became the image of the perfect bishop described by the Holy Ghost according to the blessed apostle Paul, chosen chalice, doctor of nations<sup>1</sup>. Because of this, the soldiers too, conscious of the great glory he was going to achieve, were happy for him instead of sad. As some of the brothers offered him a cooked mixture, he replied:

- It's not time, yet- he said- to finish celebrating the fast.

This would happen between ten and eleven in the morning. From Wednesday, he had accomplished the solemnity of the fast, and, in spite of the imprisonment, he, happy and steady, was longing for celebrating there, in the heaven Lord had created for the ones who loved him<sup>2</sup>, with the martyrs and prophets, the period that had started here on Friday. Already in the amphitheatre, his lector Augustalus, diligent, approached him, and, crying, implored him to let him take his shoes off. The blessed martyr, confident and exultant because of the certainty of the Lord's promise, responded this way:

- Leave it brother, I will do it myself.

Once barefooted, a soldier brother of ours, called Felix, approached him, shook his hand and implored him to remember him. With understandable words for everyone who surrounded him, he answered:

- In my thoughts, I must keep the Catholic Church, from the West to the East.

4.- Standing still at the entrance of the amphitheatre, about to accede to salvation more than to suffering, in the presence of the soldiers mentioned before, Fructuosus, in a way that they and our brothers could hear him, and inspired by the Holy Ghost, who spoke through his mouth, said:

- Never again will you lack clergyman nor will fail you the predilection and renewed promise of the Lord, neither now nor later. This, you see now, is just a passing weakness.

After having comforted the brothers, they achieved salvation, worthy and even happy in their martyrdom, as a promised fruit in the Holy Scripture. They became similar to Hananiah, Azariah and Misahel<sup>3</sup>, since The Trinity also shone on them when, still in the earthly fire the Father appeared before them, the Son comforted them and the Holy Spirit wrapped them with flames. The ropes which tied his hands were burnt out.

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<sup>1</sup> Timothy 3:2,7; Titus 1:7,9.

<sup>2</sup> Corinthians 2:9.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel 3:24,50.

Fructuosus, used to divine praise, exultant, on his knees, confident of his resurrection, prayed to God with the same victorious gesture of our crucified Lord.

5.- Later, the Lord's usual wonders did not lack: heaven opened and Babylon and Migdonius, brothers of ours, from governor Aemilianus' service, told his daughter, their earthly lady, how Fructuosus and his deacons, with aureoles, were lift up to the sky, while they still remained tied up at the stakes. But Aemilianus, although invited to see the vision, was not worthy enough to see them, and they were saying to him:

- Come and see how the ones who you have condemned today are restored in heaven and in their hope.

6.- The brothers, lost without his guide, felt distressed, not because they were sorry for Fructuosus but because they missed him. All of them, however, conscious of their faith and fight, at night, hurried to the amphitheatre with wine in order to extinguish the dead bodies, still smoking. After that, each one tried to get the largest quantity of ashes. Even then, the wonders of our Saviour and Lord manifested themselves in order to confirm the faith of the believers and set an example to the weak. It was urgent that what the martyr Fructuosus had taught in life, for God's mercy, as a promise to Lord and Saviour, was also now confirmed in his recent passion and faith in resurrection of the flesh. So then, after his sacrifice, he appeared before his brothers and ordered that each of them should restore without delay that, with love, they had taken from the ashes.

7.- Fructuosus and his deacons appeared to Aemilianus, who had condemned them, in their tunics of promise, upbraiding and reproaching him, saying that in vain had he stripped the bodies from, and buried those who, finally, he would have to recognize as winners.

Oh blessed martyrs, pure as gold in the furnace<sup>4</sup>, covered with the breastplate of faith and helmet of hope, wearing the diadem and the unfading crown for having trampled on the head of the Evil One<sup>5</sup>! Oh blessed martyrs, who deserve a glorious place in Heaven, on Christ's right, glorifying God, the Almighty, and Jesus Christ, his Son, and the Holy Spirit!

Amen.

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<sup>4</sup> Wisdom 3:6.

<sup>5</sup> 1Thessalonians 5:8; Ephesians 6:13.