

Benediction at 5:00
Delinquents: Make
your Easter Duty.

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
April 5, 1943

Adoration all day.
Make a period for
Peace. Be on time

Sebastian - The Patron Of Military Men.

There is a soldier in heaven, and men in khaki and Navy blue throughout the world are praying with trust in his power before the throne of God. Fighting men cannot help but be attracted to St. Sebastian.

Sebastian was a young man, a captain in the army of Emperor Diocletian. He was a Catholic; a fact which he concealed from the Emperor.

In the third century it was not an easy matter to be a follower of Christ. The rack, fire, scourgings and other tortures were the lot of those who were found professing allegiance to Our Lord. To be a Christian in those days was to invite martyrdom - and that is what Sebastian wanted: martyrdom; he wanted to die for the sake of Christ.

Sebastian was not selfish. He thought of his fellow men - and this is why soldiers and sailors and marines like him. Milan in Italy was his hometown. The persecution of the Christians was raging there, but it was tame in comparison to the sufferings met by the Christians in Rome. Sebastian had heard that some of the Christians, faced with a terrible death and the coaxing of relatives, denied Christ. The news of the apostacy fired him with a great desire to go to Rome to encourage the Christians. He went to Rome and used his influence to gain entrance to the prisons where he enkindled in the captured Christians a desire to die for Christ.

Word about Sebastian's missionary efforts reached Diocletian. The captain was summoned, and ordered to turn from Christ. When threats did not daunt him, he was ordered to be shot to death with arrows.

This courageous lover of Christ was bound by throngs to a tree. His breast was bared and into it was driven many arrows. Streams of blood flowed from the wounds, leaving a lifeless body. At night a holy woman by the name of Irene came to prepare the body for burial. To her surprise, she found the young man alive. Under cover of night, Irene took Sebastian home and nursed him back to health.

When Sebastian had recovered from his wounds, he went before Diocletian and chided him for his wickedness. Enraged by his sharp rebuke, the Emperor ordered the soldier to be taken to the circus and beaten to death by rods. This torture brought him death, martyrdom for Christ. He lost his life for Christ, only to find a more perfect life in heaven.

Reflection.

SEBASTIAN MADE CHRIST THE CENTER OF HIS LIFE. This must be the ideal of every Service man. One is not a good soldier, unless he is a good soldier of Jesus Christ. The man in uniform tries to think like Our Lord would have him think, following the advice of St. Paul: "Let this mind be in you which is in Christ Jesus". In the concrete, it means that the Catholic soldier and sailor will have Christ's thoughts about obedience, respect for authority, womanhood, purity of mind and body, sacrifice, death, heaven and hell, and above all, charity. Sebastian did not make himself courageous. CHRIST MADE HIM THE MAN HE BECAME BY HIS GRACE. There are about twenty days left for Notre Dame's future military men to bring themselves to Christ at Mass and Communion where they will become filled with charity and with courage.

SEBASTIAN ENCOURAGED AND HELPED THOSE AROUND HIM SERVE CHRIST. A military man does not live in a vacuum. His least action influences the men around him. GOOD EXAMPLE will lead men away from evil and towards good. The man who perseveres in clean speech, patience, obedience to orders, morning and evening prayers beside his bunk, will draw his comrades to practice virtue. NOW, TODAY and every day, do all you can for others.

PRAYERS: (deceased) Most Reverend Joseph Plagens, bishop of Grand Rapids.
One Special Intention.