



*From the Pastor  
6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in  
Ordinary Time - B  
Last Sunday before Lent  
February 11, 2018*

Although their Feast Day is not until **March 7**, which will occur in the midst of **Lent** and my series on **Lenten Prayers**

**over the People**, we will reflect today on two African Saints, martyred in or around AD 203: **Saints Perpetua & Felicity**. Their names are listed in the Roman Canon [Eucharistic Prayer I] with six other female Saints: **Agatha, Lucy** [both from Sicily], **Agnes, Cecilia** [both from Rome] & **Anastasia** [from Croatia] - which shows the diversity and universality of the early Church.

While few verifiable facts are known about **Saints Perpetua & Felicity**, we do have accounts of their martyrdom and the reasons for their arrest. Unlike today's parents, who are often saddened when their children stop practicing **any** religion or faith, the parents of these two **Saints** faced the 'flip-side' of what some parents in the 1960's and 70's endured when their children embraced exotic, often strange 'faiths.' Both Saints were born of pagan parents who opposed their girls' embrace of **Christianity**, but were horrified when the emperor decreed that all who converted to **Judaism** or **Christianity** were to be punished, and if they persisted in practicing their faith, **executed**. Here's how their faith story played out.

**Collect - Saints Perpetua & Felicity, Martyrs**

*O God, at the urging of whose love the Martyrs Saints Perpetua and Felicity defied their persecutors and overcame the torment of death, grant, we ask, by their prayers, that we may ever grow in your love. Through our Lord Jesus Christ ... and ever. Amen.*

**WHAT DO WE ENDURE FOR OUR FAITH?**

We truly have it so easy, compared to what these **Saints** endured to become **Catholic** and practice their faith. Arrested for simply **studying Catholicism**, these **catechumens** [the title given to those preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation] may have been taught and even baptized while in prison. Accurate records detail how **Saint Perpetua**, who had an infant son, was tormented by the guards who pressured her to renounce her faith so she could

mother her child, with whom she is sometimes depicted in art. However, with the help that comes from heaven, she endured her hellish persecutions, and kept the Faith!

**Prayer over the Offerings - Saints Perpetua & Felicity**

*As we joyfully offer, O Lord, this day's sacrifice, recalling the heaven-sent victory of Saints Perpetua and Felicity, we proclaim by it your mighty deeds and rejoice at having gained their glorious intercession. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**WERE THE BRUTAL ROMANS PRO-LIFERS?**

At the time of her arrest, **Saint Felicity** was eight months pregnant, but it was against Roman law to execute a pregnant woman. *[Would that our laws also protect and safeguard the unborn!]* A pious legend says that as she gave birth in prison, a Roman guard heard her moaning and groaning, and began to taunt her, asking how she'd endure **execution** if she could not handle **childbirth**. She replied that she had to endure the pangs of childbirth on her own, but would face execution with the help of Jesus, who lived within her. Do we rely on Jesus who lives within those who embody His Word, receive His **Body** and **Blood**, or become His presence through the Sacraments of **Baptism, Confirmation, Matrimony** or **Holy Orders**?

**Prayer after Communion - Saints Perpetua & Felicity**

*As we draw everlasting joys, O Lord, from our participation in this Sacrament and from the Memorial of Saints Perpetua and Felicity, we humbly implore, that by your gift we may truly understand what you grant us to enact in diligent service. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.*

**A PAIR OF POWERFUL PATRONESSES.** Both **Saints** were fed to wild animals in an arena, which was the 'sport' of the day, and other Christian women cared for their children. They are the Patron Saints of **mothers, expectant mothers, ranchers** and **butchers**. **Saints Perpetua & Felicity**, pray for us and all who struggle with publicly professing their **Catholic Faith!** **Happy Mardi Gras** and a **Blessed Lent!**

**With God's love and my prayers,**

*Father Mike*

**Very Rev. Michael J. Kreder, KHS**