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XII JULIANA

Medieval Christians were especially attracted to the life of Saint Juliana, the Virgin Martyr beheaded on February 16 at Nicomedia sometime between 305 and 311 A. D. Accounts of her martyrdom exist in many versions and attest to the stability and popularity of the legend, but the earliest vernacular adaptation appears to be Cynewulf's Old English poem. His source was a Latin text that presumably resembled the *Acta auctore anonymo ex xi veteribus MSS*, printed by the Bollandists in the seventeenth century. Despite Professor Woolf's later statement that "none of the surviving texts represents that followed by Cynewulf ("Saints' Lives," in *Continuations and Beginnings: Studies in Old English Literature*, ed. E. G. Stanley [London, 1966], p. 44), most scholars still subscribe to her earlier claim that the similarities in the progress of the action and the numerous identical phrasings suggest Cynewulf's original was closely related to the *Acta* version (see her edition of the poem [London, 1955], p. 13). The likeness was first noted by the great German editor C. W. M. Grein (*Bibliothek der angelsächsischen Poesie*, II [Göttingen, 1858], 409).

The *Martyrology* ascribed to Bede contains an epitome of Juliana's life, which parallels almost exactly the events chronicled in both the *Acta* and the poem {*PL*, 94.843; see also Entry III). In this connection S. R. T. O. d'Ardenne, the editor of a Middle English life of Juliana, asserts, "It is plain that Bede had access to a detailed Latin version of the life of St. Juliana, one MS. of which was probably the principal source used by Cynewulf" (*þe Liflade ant Te Passiun of Seinte Iulienne*, EETS, no. 248 [London, 1961], p. xx). D'Ardenne's genealogical table showing the relations of the several versions should also be consulted (pp. xxiii-xxiv).

The Acts [of Saint Juliana] by an anonymous author

Text: Johannes Bollandus and Godefridus Henschenius, eds., *Acta Sanctorum, Februarius, Tom. II* (Antwerp, 1658), 873-7.

CHAPTER I

Saint Juliana, having rejected marriage with a pagan prefect, is harshly tortured by him and her father.

Our Saviour's mercy (to which the martyrs' perseverance has testified) crowned the friends of the faith in the end, and dispelled their enemies from the very gates of hell.

In the days of the Emperor Maximianus, a persecutor of the Christian religion, there was a senator in the city of Nicomedia named Eleusius. He was a friend of the emperor and was betrothed to a girl from a noble family named Juliana. Her father was called Africanus; he was a persecutor of Christians also. His wife, while she was inwardly horrified at the sacrileges committed in Mars's name, did not associate with either Christians or pagans. Juliana, who was intelligent, had good sense, dignified conversation and was full of virtue, pondered the fact that He who made heaven and earth is the true God. Devoting herself to prayers, she used to attend God's church every day so she might understand the divine readings. But Eleusius, her fiancé, made haste to celebrate the wedding. She said to him, "Unless you attain the rank of prefect, there is no way I can marry you." When he heard this, Eleusius gave the Emperor Maximianus gifts and replaced another prefect in the administration. Eleusius sat in the coach of state and performed his official duties. When a few days had passed, he sent again to her. Juliana studied [the proposal] with good sense and said to his messengers, "When you return, say to Eleusius, 'If you believe in my God and worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, I will accept you as a husband; if not, look for another wife.' "

2. When the prefect heard this, he called her father and told him word for word what Juliana had sent him. Upon hearing it, her father said, "By men's merciful and loving gods, if these words are true, I will hand her over to you." Having said this, he rushed to his daughter in a great rage and exclaimed, "My sweetest

daughter, Juliana, light of my eyes, why don't you want to take the prefect as your husband? I wish to make your marriage to this man final." Trusting in Christ, blessed Juliana said, "If he will worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, I will marry him; if not, he cannot receive me in marriage." Hearing this, her father said, "By the merciful gods, Apollo and Diana, if you persist in speaking like this, I will hand you over to wild beasts." Juliana replied, "Father, don't believe I'm afraid of you. By the Son of the living God, I will never give in to you, even if I have to be burnt alive." A second time her father asked her to give in to him so she shouldn't lose the great honor. Juliana replied, "Ah, father, you don't understand what I am saying to you. I speak the truth and do not lie when I say I will suffer every trial and judgment joyfully. I will not abandon the teaching of my Lord Jesus Christ." At once her father ordered her to be stripped and beaten, and said to her, "Why won't you worship the gods?" She cried out, "I do not believe in, I do not worship, I do not sacrifice to deaf and dumb idols. But I worship the Lord Jesus Christ who lives forever and reigns in heaven." After she had been tortured, her father handed her over to the prefect, her fiancé.

3. The prefect ordered her to be led before his tribunal at dawn. When he saw her beauty, he addressed her with the gentlest words, "Tell me, my sweetest Juliana, why have you mocked me for so long? Who persuaded you to worship a strange god? Turn back to me and escape all the torments prepared for you if you refuse to sacrifice." Blessed Juliana replied, "If you agree with me to worship God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, I will give in to you. But if you refuse, you will not be my lord." The prefect said, "My lady Juliana, give in to me and I will believe in your God." Blessed Juliana replied, "Receive the Spirit of God and I will marry you." The prefect said, "I can't, my lady, because, if I do, the emperor will hear about it; and when he has appointed a successor to me, he will behead me with a sword." Saint Juliana replied, "If you fear this mortal emperor, who sits on a dunghill, how can you compel me to deny the immortal Emperor? So you can't deceive me with all this coaxing. Inflict on me whatever torments you like. I trust in Him, whom Abraham, Isaac and Jacob trusted in, and they were not confounded; for He is powerful enough to free me from your torments."

4. When he heard this, the prefect grew very angry and ordered her to be beaten. After Saint Juliana had been stretched out on the ground, he ordered her to be scourged naked with four switches in such a way that three soldiers alternated beating her in turn. Then the prefect told them to stop and said to her, "Look, this was just the beginning of the test. Give in; sacrifice to the great Diana and you will be freed from torment. But if you refuse, by the great god Apollo, I won't spare you." Saint Juliana replied, "Don't think you can recall me from my Lord Jesus Christ with your threats." Then the prefect ordered her to be suspended by the hair. When she had been hanging for six hours, she cried out, "Christ, Son of God, come and help me." The prefect then ordered her to be taken down and said to her, "Give in, Juliana, and sacrifice so you won't die in torment. For the One whom you think you worship as God will not be able to free you." Juliana replied, "Wretched man, you won't be able to conquer me through your torments. In the Name of my Lord Jesus Christ I shall overcome your savage spirit and make your father, Satan, redden with shame. I will find courage in the sight of my Lord Jesus Christ." Moved with anger, the prefect commanded them to heat metal pots. When Juliana had been stripped, he ordered her to be plunged in and scalded from head to toe. This was done, but she suffered no harm. Next he ordered her to be bound by the legs and thus taken to prison.

5. Afterwards, when Juliana had been put into prison, she said, "My Lord, almighty God, my soul is at the point of death; strengthen me, hear me, pity me and pity those who stand around me grieving. Give me your mercy, just as you gave it to all who pleased you. Also, I beseech you, Lord, don't forsake me because my father and mother have abandoned me; but receive me, O Lord my God, and do not cast me from your countenance. Don't desert me in this time of trouble, but keep me safe among these tortures. As you saved Daniel in the lions' den and freed Hananiah, Azariah and Mishael from the fiery furnace, so protect me in the brevity of this life. Lead me into the harbor of your will, as you led Israel's sons through the sea, when they fled from Egypt; the sea became land as it were [for them], but buried their enemies. So think me worth listening to, Lord. Drown the threats of the tyrant who has risen against me. Destroy his power and spirit; because you, Lord, who know human nature, know it cannot endure captivity. God, be a ready helper and aid in the torments which Eleusius (who does not obey your express commands) is about to heap upon me. Make

this prefect, who is the demons' companion, the object of my scorn. Have him grievously tormented and consumed by worms, so that your power may be revealed through me, your handmaiden. For you alone are God and we proclaim your glory forever and ever. Amen."

CHAPTER II

When he urges wicked things upon her, a demon is beaten by Juliana and dragged away captive.

6. When she had finished the prayer, a demon called Belial appeared to her in an angel's form, and said to her, "My dear Juliana, the prefect is preparing the most evil and terrible torments for you. Only listen to me and you will be saved. When he orders you to leave the prison, give in and sacrifice and you will escape the torments." Saint Juliana thought he was an angel of God and said to him, "Who are you?" The devil said to her, "I am the Lord's angel. He sent me to you so you would sacrifice and not die." Sighing most bitterly, Juliana cried out to the Lord; raising her eyes to heaven, she said with tears, "O Lord, God of heaven and earth, do not desert me or let your handmaiden perish. Strengthen my heart in your might and show me, as one who trusts in your Name, who it is that speaks such things and urges me to worship idols." Immediately a voice came to her from heaven, saying, "Have faith, Juliana; I who speak to you am with you. Seize the person talking to you so you may know who he is."

7. Rising from the ground. Saint Juliana made the sign of Christ and seized the demon Belial. She said to him, "Tell me, who are you; where do you come from and who sent you to me?" The demon replied, "Let me go and I will tell you." Blessed Juliana said, "You tell me first and then I will let you go." Then the demon began to speak, "I am the demon Belial, whom some call Jopher the Black. I have been entertained by men's wickednesses. I rejoice in murders. I love luxury. I embrace war. I destroy peace. It is I who made Adam and Eve transgress in paradise; I who made Cain kill his brother Abel; I who made all Job's fortune waste away; I who made the people of Israel worship idols in the desert; I who had the prophet Isaiah cut like wood by a saw; I who made King Nabuchodonosor set up an idol; I who had the three boys sent into the fiery furnace; I who caused Jerusalem to be burned; I who had the infants killed by Herod; I who made Judas betray the Son of God (I took possession of Judas so that he finished his life with a noose). It is I who goaded the soldier to pierce the side of God's Son with a lance; I who had John beheaded by Herod; I who said, through Simon, that Peter and Paul were sorcerers; I who entered into the Emperor Nero so that he crucified Peter and beheaded Paul; I who had Andrew betrayed in the region of Patras. I and my brothers have done all these things and worse."

8. Blessed Juliana said, "Who sent you to me?" The demon replied, "Satan, my father." Saint Juliana said, "What do they call your father?" The demon replied, "Beelzebub." Saint Juliana said, "What does he do?" The demon replied, "He is the inventor of all evil. For the moment we are in his presence, he directs us to tempt the souls of the faithful." Saint Juliana said, "What does the demon rejected by a Christian suffer?" The demon replied, "He suffers the most evil and terrible torments. If we have been sent against a just man to ruin him, and if we cannot do it, we hide from Satan who sent us. For when he has looked for us and doesn't find us, he charges the other demons: once they find the demon he sent, they must torment him cruelly. Then the demon flees so he cannot be found. We have therefore to do what Satan commands and obey him as the most gracious of parents." Saint Juliana said, "Tell me, against what just works do you proceed?" The demon replied, "Listen, my lady, so I may tell you everything and you may know the truth from me. The way in which I have come here to you in my wickedness, thinking to persuade you to sacrifice and deny your God, is the way I and my brothers enter into all men."

9. "When we find a wise man holding fast to God's work, we fill him with many lusts. We turn his soul toward those objects we place near him; we introduce error into his thoughts; and we do not allow him to persevere either in prayer or any good work. Again, if we see people attending church, sorry for their sins, and desiring to hear the Divine Scriptures in order to keep some part of them, we immediately enter their homes. We do not allow them to do anything good and we introduce many thoughts into their hearts. But if one of them can overcome us, and withdraws from his idle thoughts, begins to pray, to listen to the Holy Scriptures and to receive the Divine Mystery, headlong we flee from him. For when Christians receive the

Divine Mystery, at that very hour we retreat from them. We care only about the ruination of men who live well. And if we see them do anything good, we afflict them with bitter thoughts so they may follow our wishes."

10. Saint Juliana said, "Impure spirit, how do you presume to meddle with Christians?" The demon replied, "You tell me! How do you dare seize me, unless it is because you trust in Christ? So I too trust my father, since he is the author of wicked deeds; and I do what he wants. For I have tried to carry through a number of evil schemes and several times my plans have turned out successfully. But how miserable I am, now that I have been sent to you! If only I hadn't seen you! Alas, what I suffer in my misery! Why didn't my father see what would happen to me? Let me go, so I can cross over to the other place. For I will denounce you to my father and it will go badly with you." Saint Juliana then bound his hands behind his back and threw him to the ground. Taking one of the ropes with which she herself was bound, she struck the demon. The demon cried out imploringly, "My lady Juliana, companion of the apostles, associate of the martyrs, partner of the patriarchs, consort of the angels, I entreat you through the Passion of the Lord Jesus Christ, have pity on my wretchedness."

11. Saint Juliana said, "Confess to me, impure spirit, which men have you injured?" The demon replied, "I have blinded the eyes of many men; broken the feet of others; sent others into the fire; hanged others; caused others to vomit blood; drowned others in the sea; made others end their lives violently; made others tear themselves in fury with their own hands. And, to put it briefly, all the evils which exist in this world are executed on my advice, and I myself perform them. Others, whom I have found without the sign of Christ, I have killed. While I did all these evils, nobody dared to torture me as much as you. None of the apostles even gripped my hand, but you have bound me. None of the martyrs beat me. None of the prophets inflicted on me the injuries I have received from you. None of the patriarchs laid a hand upon me. For I undertook the temptation of the Son of God Himself in the desert; I made Him climb a high mountain, but He did nothing to me. And you destroy me with torments like this? Virginity, why are you armed against us? John, why did you reveal your virginity to oppose us?"

12. While the demon was saying this, the prefect ordered Juliana to be brought to him from prison. Saint Juliana dragged the demon with her as she was being led out. The demon pleaded with her, "My lady Juliana, let me go. Don't make me even more ridiculous now to men, for afterwards I'll be unable to conquer them. You have conquered my father; you have bound me. What more do you want? The unbelievers say the Christians are merciful, but you seem ferocious to me." As the demon said this, Saint Juliana dragged him through the marketplace; and although he pleaded with her a long time, she threw him into a place full of dung.

CHAPTER III

Saint Juliana is beheaded after various tortures, and one hundred and thirty are converted by her. The translation of her body.

13. As Juliana came into the palace, her face seemed full of glory to everyone. When the prefect had looked at her, he said admiringly, "Tell me, Juliana, who taught you such things? How have you overcome torments as great as these with incantations?" Saint Juliana replied, "Listen to me, most irreverent prefect, and I will tell you. My Lord Jesus Christ taught me to worship the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It was He who conquered your father, Satan, and his demons; it was He who sent His angel from His holy dwelling-place to help and comfort me. But you, wretch, do not know that eternal torments are prepared for you. You will endure unending tortures there, the devouring worm that never stops, and eternal darkness. Unhappy man, repent. For the Lord Jesus Christ is merciful and loving, and He wishes to save all men. He gives repentance for salvation and remission of sins."

14. Then the prefect ordered an iron wheel to be brought in and pointed swords fixed on it; and he ordered the virgin to be placed over the wheel so it would stand between two columns with four soldiers on one side and four on the other. The soldiers drew up the wheel and had Juliana set upon it. After they had drawn it up, they spun the machine, and the noble body of Christ's virgin was split apart in all its members. Marrow came

out of her bones and the whole wheel was bathed in it. Flames raged from the fire. Blessed Juliana, however, stood resolute in Christ's faith—her body broken, but her faith firm. And the angel of the Lord came down from heaven and put out the flame; and the chains were melted by the fire.

15. Saint Juliana stood without pain and glorified God; she stretched her hand toward heaven and began to speak with tears and sighs, "Lord God almighty, you who alone possess immortality, Giver of life, Creator of all ages; you who extended the heavens with your hands and established the earth's foundations; you who fashioned man with your hands, Planter of paradise and Governor of the living tree of humanity; you who freed Lot from Sodom because of his hospitality; you who blessed Jacob and freed Joseph from the envy of his brothers (when he was sold into Egypt) and bestowed on him the honor of princes; you who sent your servant Moses into Egypt, saved him from Pharaoh's hand, and led your people through the Red Sea as if it were land; you who subjugated the foreign race, cast down the giant Goliath by the hands of your holy youth, David, and raised him to royal power; you who assumed flesh from the Virgin and were seen by the shepherds; you who are worshipped by angels and were adored by the Magi; you who revived the dead, gathered the apostles together, and commanded them to announce your kingdom; you who were betrayed by Judas, crucified in the flesh, buried in the earth, seen by the disciples after the Resurrection, and ascended into heaven; you who gave knowledge of yourself to all who believe, when you sent your apostles throughout the world; you who are the salvation of the dead, the way for those who err, the refuge for the weak: you are the one, the almighty and only true God; none can praise you for the wrong reason, but only for the right reason. I give thanks to you, God of all, you who have deigned to lead me, unworthy and sinful as I am, into your protection. And I beg, O Lord, that you deign to free me from this tyrant's malice so that he may be totally disgraced, along with his father, Satan. And I will always give glory to you forever and ever."

16. When she had said, "Amen," the tormentors of the city of Nicomedia cried out, "There is one God omnipotent, the God of the holy maiden Juliana and there is no other God but Him. Prefect, we repent that till now we have been led into error." And with one voice they all said, "We flee to you, O Lord. Let it suffice that we have erred thus far; henceforth we will believe in the God whom Juliana worships." Having been converted, they said to the ruler, "May all the pagan gods perish; may all who worship idols be struck down. Irreverent prefect, punish us so that we may expiate our sins, we who have worshipped idols till now. Light the fire. Think of your father's works. For henceforth we choose to have the Lord Jesus Christ as our Father, since we have been afflicted too long by your father, the devil." The prefect, filled with anger, reported everything to the Emperor Maximianus. The Emperor Maximianus passed sentence against them, and ordered all their heads cut off; but the prefect himself ordered everybody to be struck down by the sword at the same time, and one hundred and thirty men and women were beheaded.

17. The prefect ordered Saint Juliana, however, to be burnt alive. When Saint Juliana heard this, she stretched her hands toward heaven and said with tears, "O Lord God almighty, do not desert me, nor depart from me, nor banish me from your countenance; but be the one who helps me. Deliver me from this punishment and blot out my sins—those I may have committed in word or thought. O Lord, my kind and merciful God, have mercy on me so that my enemy, the tyrant Eleusius, may not say, 'Where is her God?' For you are a God blessed forever." While she was saying this, behold, the angel of the Lord came suddenly, parted the fire and put out the flame. Saint Juliana stood there unharmed, glorifying God in the fire.

18. The prefect roared at her like an evil beast and wondered what punishment to inflict upon her. He commanded a pot to be brought in, filled with lead, and placed over a raging fire [*ignem*]. When Juliana had been set over the pot, it became like a warm bath for her. But the pot itself recoiled from her and burned seventy-five of the men who were standing nearby. When the prefect saw this, he tore his clothes in a rage and berated the gods with a groan, because they could not hurt her, and also because, though she had injured them, they could not harm her at all. He sentenced her at once to be punished by the sword.

19. When Saint Juliana heard this, she was filled with great joy because the end of her struggle had come. After she had been dragged to the place where she was to be beheaded, the demon she had tormented suddenly came running up to the ruler and said, "Don't spare her. She has blasphemed the gods and injured

men. I too have endured many evils from her. So give her what she deserves." Saint Juliana opened her eyes slightly to see who was saying such things. Then the timid demon cried out, "Alas for me, miserable wretch; now perhaps she wants to seize me again." He vanished immediately and stopped talking, as he fled.

20. When she had been led to the place where she was to be beheaded, Juliana began to speak to those who had been converted to the faith and the other Christians there present, "My fathers and mothers, listen to me. Repent that you have sacrificed to demons. Build your houses on firm rock, so you will not be shattered by the coming fierce winds. Always pray constantly in Holy Church, pay attention to the Holy Scriptures, love each other, and the Lord will grant that you find mercy in the sight of His saints. It is good to keep the vigil for God. It is good to sing psalms frequently. It is good to pray without ceasing, because you do not know when you may end this life. I ask you to pray for me, so that my Lord Jesus Christ will find me worthy and will deign to lead me, His humble handmaiden, into His holy court, and watch over the course of my trial so the enemy may not vanquish me." When she had given the peace to all, she prayed again to the Lord, "O Lord God, Father of all, Lover of faith, you who do not betray your image into enemies' hands, have mercy on me, help me and receive my spirit with peace, Lord." As she said this prayer, she was beheaded.

21. After a short time, a certain Sephonia, the wife of a senator, was going through the city of Nicomedia on her way to the city of Rome. She took blessed Juliana's body and embalmed it with aromatics and precious linens. While she was travelling to the city [of Rome], a mighty tempest arose and the boat turned aside to the land of Campania. Juliana was buried near the territory of Puteoli, where she has a mausoleum, a mile from the sea.

22. While the prefect Eleusius, however, was sailing to his estate, a mighty tempest came and swamped his boat. Twenty-four men died and when the water had cast them up in a desert place, their bodies were devoured by beasts and birds. Blessed Juliana suffered on the fourteenth day before the Kalends of March [February 16], at the hands of the prefect Eleusius in the reign of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom is glory forever and ever. Amen.