

San Vitale of Milan

*All Saints Pilgrimage 2010*

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The martyrdom of Saint Vitalis.

This 14th century French manuscript depicts Vitalis being buried alive.

Martyr Died ~1st century or 2nd century

Feast Day: April 28

Married St. Valeria and had children - Saint Gervase and Saint Protase

### **Biography**

Vitalis was a wealthy citizen of Milan, perhaps a soldier. He was married to Saint Valeria, and they were the parents of the perhaps legendary Saints Gervasius and Pretasius. According to legend, when he encouraged Saint Ursicinus of Ravenna to be steadfast at his execution, Vitalis was discovered to be a Christian. A judge named Paulinus ordered Vitalis to be racked and then buried alive in a pit with stones on his head.

The date of his martyrdom is uncertain – some sources say that he was a victim of Nero, others of Marcus Aurelius. He was martyred in Ravenna, but all else in the story is suspect. Some writers argue that he may have been a character in a work of fiction that was mistaken for history.

## **Veneration**

The feast of Saint Vitalis occurs on April 28. Churches are dedicated in honor of Saint Vitalis at Rome, Faenza, Rimini, Como, Ferrara, Venice and Verona in Italy, and at Jadera (now Zadar) in Dalmatia, but by far the most famous church bearing his name is the octagonal Basilica of San Vitale at Ravenna, a masterpiece of Byzantine art, erected on the purported site of his martyrdom. He is also the patron saint of Granarolo, Italy, as well as of Thibodaux, Louisiana, along with his wife, St. Valeria.

### **Patron Saint of:**

Ravenna, Italy

Granarolo dell'Emilia, Italy;

Thibodaux, Louisiana

### **Prayer to Saint Vitalis**

God of all creation, you gave Saint Vitalis the privilege of being counted among the saints who gave their lives in faithful witness\_ to the gospel.

May his prayers give us the courage to share with him the cup of suffering and to rise to eternal glory. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. (Adapted from the Prayer to St. Polycarp)