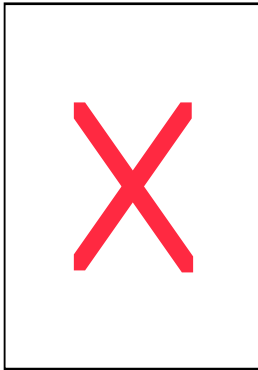


The following are my sources and notes that I wrote up in preparation for writing my St. Joder stories, *Forgiveness in the Bones* and *St. Joder and the Bell*.

- pp.1—6 Yoder Newsletter—article on Joder Chapel
- pp. 7—19 Theban Martyr materials
 - pp. 7—10 Bible Probe article
 - pp. 10—11 Switzerland Is Yours website—article on St. Maurice
 - pp. 11—12 Catholic Encyclopedia—articles on Sion and Agaunum
 - pp.12—16 Bishop Eucherius’s original account of the Theban Martyrs
 - pp. 17—19 *Focus* article-- *From Diocletian to Lenin and Beyond: The Continuing Witness of St. Maurice*
- pp. 20—22 Heilingen Lexikon—German website about lives of saints
- p. 22 Wikipedia article on Pennine Alps
- pp. 22—23 Yoder Newsletter article on Joderhorn
- pp. 24—26 Bells information
 - p. 24 Exploratorium article on bells and weather
 - pp. 24—25 *All Good Bells Go to Heaven* excerpts
 - p. 25 *A Little General History about Bells and Handbells*
 - p. 26 Article on Scandinavian beliefs on bells
- pp. 26—31 Damasus and the papacy
 - pp. 26—28 Wikipedia article on Damasus
 - p. 28 Wikipedia and Catholic Encyclopedia articles on “Pope” as a title
 - pp. 28—30 *Ecclesiology* article on how papal power grew
 - pp. 30—31 *Christian History Institute* article on how Damasus came to the papacy
- pp. 32—33 General History Timeline of the 5th Century
- p. 34 My Own Timeline of Joder’s Life
- pp. 35—40 Dorothy Gladys Spicer’s story *The Bishop’s Bell*

1. St. Joder Tales—Sources & Outlines



According to the Yoder Newsletter Online, Issue #7, April, 1986, there was a series of nine paintings on the walls of a church in Switzerland depicting St. Joder in various activities. Underneath were German inscriptions. These inscriptions were translated by a certain Edith Joder in 1966. Of the current status of the church in question and its paintings, I have no idea. In the text below, her translations are in quotation marks and italicized. In the Newsletter, following each inscription was a paragraph or two, apparently written by the editor of the Yoder Newsletter, and I have put them in Arial font. The source of that individual's information is unknown to me. Accompanying the original paper copy of the newsletter were photographs, but I am working from the on-line version, which doesn't have the photographs.

I have inserted in brackets my own questions and speculations. I am thinking of fleshing out these highly compressed and enigmatic comments into full fledged stories.

(1) "How King Charles is forgiven his sin by praying with St. Joder"

The saint is shown kneeling at the altar, more or less facing us. As in all these pictures, he is shown with an aureole, or mandorla, not a narrow halo but more of a gold disk, behind his head, the kind of symbol often used for Jesus and the saints as painted by early artists. The king, toward the left in the picture, kneels behind St. Joder with hands outstretched, an attendant kneeling on each side of him but respectfully behind him.

Charlemagne (Charles the Great) lived from 742 to 814 A.D. and St. Joder, Bishop Theodore of Sion in southern Switzerland, lived in the fourth century. This immediately illustrates how errors can creep into oral tradition not substantiated by written records. As stories were handed down from generation to generation two other saints became confused with St. Theodore. This later "Carolingian St. Joder" was especially popularized by a wandering monk, Ruodpertus, who attributed the same accomplishments and qualities to a bishop coming four centuries later as for the real St. Theodore. However the character of these saints was so identical that when of the true St. Joder was eventually identified, the high esteem felt by the people did not need to be altered.

[How does the writer know the reference to King Charles is Charlemagne? There were many kings named Charles. I don't think this could be made into a story featuring Charlemagne, unless I wanted to make it a time travel one. Ha!]

(2) "How King Charles hands the spiritual and secular emblems (crosier and sword) over to St. Joder"

In this picture the principals are standing, each with his attendants, as the emblems are transferred. We might think of Charlemagne's ups and downs with papal power in his day, or perhaps later struggles between church and state going on at the time the pictures were painted; but it is very likely that the artist was simply making a pious observation that even so great a monarch as Charles the Great would be willing to submit to the representative of the Heavenly Kingdom, especially one as outstanding and good as St. Joder.

[same problem here—but could some secular authority from 4th century Rome be substituted here? How about a spiritual confirmation—such as an angel?]

(3) "How St. Joder forgave the sin of the people of St. Moritzen"

This interesting picture shows St. Joder and retinue beholding an opened grave, showing three bodies, one of them with a mandorla.

One of the things that brought the real St. Theodore into prominence was the discovery of the remains of the "Theban Martyrs". He ordered a basilica built over the site in their memory. (This same thing was later also credited to the Carolingen St. Joder.) Later legend began to associate the remains of St. Joder himself with those of the martyrs and finally votive offerings began in his name.

St. Moritz is now known on the Swiss maps as St. Maurice and it is located about twenty miles across the mountains to the west of Sion, where St. Theodore lived.

We need to know more about this story to understand what motivated this picture and what the discovery of the remains had to do with St. Moritz; but the artist at any rate wanted us to know that St. Joder, a man of power and authority, was also a man of mercy and forgiveness.

[The town of St. Maurice is located on the river Rhone, and is downriver from Sion, the capital of Valais. Valais is the southernmost Swiss canton (province) and borders Italy and France. It is mostly quite mountainous, with towns placed in narrow valleys carved by rivers.

I agree with the writer that the subject of the original picture is quite enigmatic. How did the people of St. Moritz sin? What did the discovery of this grave have to do with St. Joder forgiving them? Who exactly is in the grave?]

(4) *"How St. Joder overheard the evil spirits discussing their misdeeds".*

St. Joder, again with staff in hand is standing on an archway in a mountain setting, while under the arch the devils are shown in animated conversation. St. Joder's powers were considered so great that he could understand and outwit the Devil, as we shall see. It has been said that his image has been shown with a devil underfoot to show his triumph over evil.

[This introduces the theme of St. Joder's power over demons and the Devil. How did he get such power? Was it a good or bad thing to have? What were the demons discussing?]

(5) *"How St. Joder ordered the Bell to ring by itself".*

St. Joder in full regalia at the entrance of a grotto, with sharp hills in the background and a few buildings at the upper edges of the picture, is shown confronting a bell almost as big as he is.

This is probably related to some tale known in the Middle Ages, but all I know about it is that the bell was especially associated with St. Theodore and he was often shown with one. His chapel tower at Sion may have been among the very first in Switzerland to have had a bell. Later on when other bells were cast for churches or monasteries requests were often made for a chip from St. Theodore's bell (like a blessing) that they could incorporate into their new one. In his dissertation about offerings to the saints in the Sion diocese during the Middle Ages Eugen Gruber pointed out that not only were there many requests for such chips, but the bell in Grabunden (Tersnaus Lugnes), one in Bern (Meikirch), and one in Lucerne (Roth) still bear the inscription of St. Joder today.

[Here is where a bell shows up. Is there a link with the next painting, which prominently features a bell? What exactly was the connection between St. Joder and bells? Why was the bell in a grotto? Why didn't it ring? Why was St. Joder commanding it to ring?]

(6) *"How St. Joder ordered the Devil to carry him and the Bell on his shoulders across the Wallis" (the Valais country of southern Switzerland).*

Again in mountainous country, St. Joder- with the insignia of authority in his hands is shown sitting in the Bell, which is being carried by a fierce two-legged beast with horns and a tail and arms that can reach back to hold his burden on his shoulders. This comes close to the story of how St. Joder was to have brought his bell from Rome.

The Pope had presented him with a bell to take back with him for his diocesan center at Sion, but he had no way to get the huge bell up into the mountains. He then thought of his power to make the Devil do his bidding. Summoning him, St. Joder proposed to him that he could have a human soul if he could transport the

bell up to Sion before daybreak (cockcrow). St. Joder then sat into the bauch of the Bell, a term many of our readers can understand and the Devil in eager anticipation swiftly bore him through the air. But the might of St. Joder was greater than the cunning of the Devil. At the command of the Bishop a rooster crowed before dawn came.

[What is the source of this highly compressed account? Why did the Pope give him a bell? Where did the bell come from? If it came from Rome, as indicated by being a gift from the Pope, then how did it get transported from there to the Valais area? What exactly was the nature of the deal between St. Joder and the Devil? What is a bauch? How does the outcome of the story reveal St. Joder's outwitting of the Devil?]

(7) *"How the Devil let The bell fall and it broke to pieces".*

The above story ended fortunately, yet these two pictures seem related. This picture shows the bell, though cracked and lying in a fallen position, not obviously broken. St. Joder, with hands upraised, is shown victorious over the Devil, who is seen flying away through the air in defeat, his long wavy tail following after. This time his wings are outstretched.

[Is this the same story or a different one? In what way was St. Joder victorious if the bell was damaged? What eventually became of the bell?]

(8) *"How bad weather destroyed the building of those who worked on St. Joder's Day"*

The building shown is not much higher than the men who are working on it. One is lying prone in front of the doorway, while another holds his hands to his head. He and the man working at the side of the building look up in what must be astonishment at the wonderfully large hailstones (Or is it heavy snowfall?) that have taken them by surprise. Apparently the painter wanted to instruct us on proper reverence for a great bishop.

The old church calendars show the feast day for St. Joder to be August 16, the day believed to be the time of his death. (You can greet your kin on that day with "Happy St. Joder's Day" or perhaps for us simply "Happy Yoder's Day!").

It is appropriate at this point to mention that St. Joder was also called upon as a powerful protector against bad weather. According to some documents of 1497, people sang at a service the following Antiphon after the Magnificat in their mass:

"Oh glorious pontifex, worker with your devotions, save us from hailstones from cold and frost--that you may be eternally praised by the productiveness of our fruits."

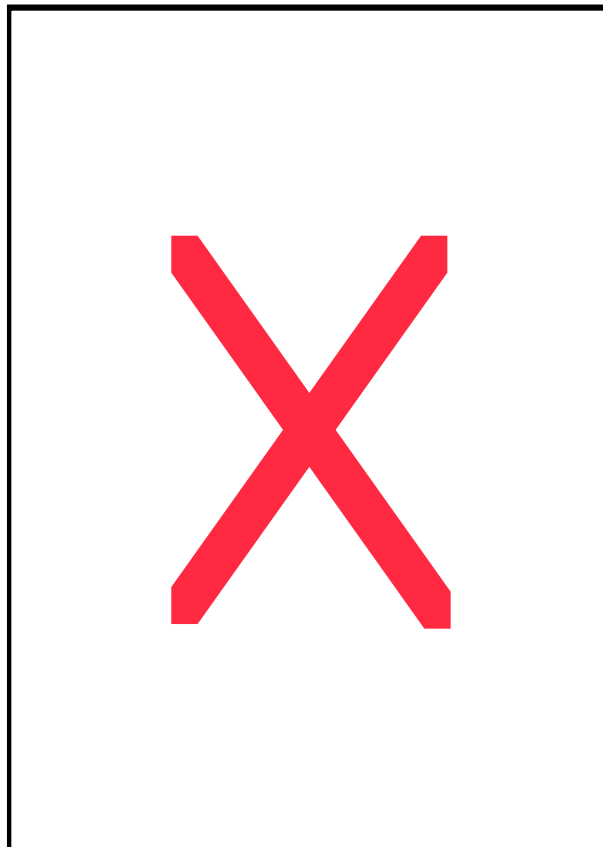
Associated with reference to weather was also another picture handed down during the Middle Ages (but not hanging in the chapel). St. Joder was shown

kneeling in the foreground blessing the grape vines. In the background was a Church in front of which a sexton wringing his hands in the midst of an excited throng. He was to have rung the bell in warning of an approaching storm but he could not do this, for the Devil had possession of it and was shown grinning maliciously behind St. Joder. This picture seems to have been more intent on telling a story than teaching a lesson.

(9) "How a priest who threw away a picture of St. Joder saw his hands dry up".

The partial image of St. Joder, with a staff but no mandorla at his head, lies in a doorway. The priest, with three others behind him, looks at his own outstretched hands. This is again a reminder that St. Joder was to be held in reverence and there could be dire consequences for those who did not.)

All this lore about St. Theodore, bishop of Sion, illustrates a number of things about Christianity in the Middle Ages. We feel we have quite outgrown the need or use of magic and superstition to guide and encourage us in our daily lives or to foster our proper respect for good people. However we think we have our own ways to determine who are the good and worthy persons, and we still want to appreciate and respect them.



2. Some Materials Relating to the Theban Martyrs

2a. Here is some information about the “Theban Martyrs.” I’ve boldfaced the sentences that refer to St. Joder. The posting comes from an interdenominational website called Bible Probe. The poster was anonymous. The source of the poster’s information is not given.

source: <http://www.bibleprobe.com/theban.html>

An Entire Roman Legion was Martyred for Christ

The Theban Legion was a Christian legion of soldiers during the reign of Diocletian. A legion of men consisting of 6,600 (some say: 6,666) soldiers were all Christian. They were called the Theban legion because there were all conscripted from Thebes in Upper Egypt; they were quartered in the east until they were ordered to march to Gaul. The area around Thebes has always enjoyed a reputation for its strong, almost fanatical, Christianity. The first monks in the Christian tradition, known as "The Desert Fathers," contained a majority of Thebans, and Coptic Christians celebrate many martyrs who refused to yield their faith to the many persecutions in the first centuries of the church.

A traveler on the highway that leads from Geneva to Rome, will notice a small and a very old Swiss town called "Saint Maurice" (now Saint-Moritz or Saint Maurice en Valais or Saint Maurice d'Augaune) in Switzerland. This town was known in the Roman times as "Aguanum", an important communication center. It was there that a Coptic officer named Maurice and 6600 of his fellow soldiers died for the sake of Christ at the hands of the impious Emperor Maximian (285-305 AD).

The story of these martyrs, commonly known as the Theban Legion (Alkateeba alTeebia or Alkateeba al-sa'eedia) has been preserved for us by Saint Eucher (aka: Bishop Eucherius of Lyon), the bishop of Lyons, who died in 494 AD. The bishop starts the account of the martyrdom of these valiant soldiers by the following introduction:

"Here is the story of the passion of the holy Martyrs who have made Aguanum illustrious with their blood. It is in honour of this heroic martyrdom that we narrate with our pen the order of events as it came to our ears. We often hear, do we not, a particular locality or city is held in high honour because of one single martyr who died there, and quite rightly, because in each case the saint gave his precious soul to the most high God. How much more should this sacred place, Aguanum, be revered, where so many thousands of martyrs have been slain, with the sword, for the sake of Christ."

Under "Maximinus Daia" also known as Maximian, who was an Emperor of the Roman Empire with Diocletian as his colleague (co-Emperor), an uprising of the Gauls known as "Bagaude" forced Maximian to march against them with an army, of which one unit was the Thebian Legion, composed of 6600 men, in the Spring of 285.. This unit had been recruited from upper Egypt and consisted entirely of Christians. They were good men and soldiers who, even under arms, did not forget to render to God the things of God, and to

Caesar the things of Caesar. Diocletian and Maximian transferred the Theban Legion, among other imperial units, to Gaul in an effort to crush the revolt. Landing near Rome, the Theban Legion marched through northern Italy, across the St. Bernard pass, and encamped near the present-day town of St. Maurice.

After the revolt was quelled, the Emperor Maximian issued an order that the whole army should join offering sacrifices for the Roman gods for the success of their mission. Although these types of offerings were routine, this offering was also tantamount to recognizing the emperor's claim to divinity. The order included killing Christians (probably as a sacrifice to the Roman gods). Only the Theban Legion dared to refuse to comply with the orders. The legion withdrew itself, encamped near Aguanum and refused to take part in these rites.

Maximian was then resting in a near-by place called Octodurum. When this news came to him, he repeatedly commanded them to obey his orders, and upon their constant and unanimous refusal, he ordered that the legion should be "decimated". Accordingly, every tenth man was put to death. A second "decimation" was ordered unless the men obeyed the order given, but there was a great shout through the legion camp: they all declared that they would never allow themselves to carry out such a sacrilegious order. They had always had a horror of idolatry. They had been brought up as Christians and were instructed in the One Eternal God and were ready to suffer extreme penalties rather than do any thing contrary to their religion.

When Maximian heard this news, he got angrier than ever. Like a savage beast, he ordered the second decimation to be carried out, intending that the remainder should be compelled to do what they hitherto refused. Yet they still maintained their resolve. After the second decimation, Maximian warned the remainder of the Theban legion that it was of no use for them to trust in their number, for if they persisted in their disobedience, not a man among them would be able to escape death.

The greatest mainstay of their faith in this crisis was undoubtedly their Commanding Officer Mauritius (Maurice), with his lieutenants Candid, the first commanding officer, and Exuperius the "Compidoctor". He fired the hearts of the soldiers with fervor by his exhortation. Maurice, calling attention to the example of their faithful fellow soldiers, already martyrs, persuaded them all to be ready to die in their turn for the sake of their baptismal vow (the promise one makes at his baptismal to renounce Satan and his abominable service and to worship only God). He reminded them of their comrades who had gone to heaven before them. At his words, a glorious eagerness for martyrdom burned in the hearts of these most blessed men.

Fired thus by the leadership of their officers, the Theban legion sent to Maximian (who was still enraged) a reply as loyal as it is brave:

``Emperor, we are your soldiers, but also the soldiers of the true God. We owe you military service and obedience, but we cannot renounce Him who is our Creator and Master, and is also yours even though you reject Him. In all things which are not against

His law, we most willingly obey you, as we have done hitherto. We readily oppose your enemies whoever they are, but we cannot stain our hands with the blood of innocent people (Christians). We have taken an oath to God before we took one to you; you cannot place any confidence in our second oath if we violate the other (the first). You commanded us to execute Christians, behold we are such. We confess God the Father the creator of all things and His Son Jesus Christ, as God. We have seen our comrades slain with the sword; we do not weep for them but rather rejoice at their honour. Neither this, nor any other provocation has tempted us to revolt. Behold, we have arms in our hands, but we do not resist, because we would rather die innocent than live by any sin."

When Maximian heard this, he realized that these men were obstinately determined to remain in their Christian faith, and he despaired of being able to turn them from their constancy. He therefore decreed, in a final sentence, that they should be rounded up, and the slaughter completed. The troops sent to execute this order came to the blessed legion and drew their swords upon those holy men who, for love of life, did not refuse to die. They were all slain with the sword. They never resisted in any way. Putting aside their weapons, they offered their necks to the executioners. Neither their numbers nor the strength of arms tempted them to uphold the justice of their cause by force.

They kept just one thing in their minds, that they were bearing witness to Him who was lead to death without protest, and who, like a lamb, opened not His mouth, but that now ,they themselves, sheep in the Lord's flock, were to be massacred as if by ravaging wolves. Thus, by the savage cruelty of this tyrant, that fellowship of the saints was perfected, for they despised things present in hope of things to come. So was slain that truly angelic legion of men who, we trust, now praise the Lord God of Hosts, together with the legions of Angels, in heaven forever. Not all the members of the legion were at Aguanum at the time of the massacre. Others were posted along the military highway linking Switzerland with Germany and Italy. These were progressively and methodically martyred wherever they were found.

*During their martyrdom, numerous miracles happened, which undoubtedly contributed greatly to the massive conversion of the inhabitants of these regions to Christianity. In Zurich for instance, three beheaded saints Felix, Regula and Exuperantius, miraculously rose, carried their heads on their own hands, walked to the top of a hill, where they knelt, prayed and at last lay down. On the same spot, a large cathedral was later erected. The three saints carrying their heads on their hands appear on the coat of arms and seal of Zurich until today. Saints Victor, Orsus and their comrades were barbarously tortured by Hirtacus, the Roman governor of Solothurn. During this torture, several miracles occurred, e.g. the shackles suddenly broke open, the fire was instantaneously extinguished, etc. The onlookers were thus filled with wonder and began to admire the Theban legionaires, upon which the furious Hirtacus ordered their immediate beheading. Without the slightest resistance they offered the executors their necks. The bodies of the beheaded Saints then shown in glaring brightness. The bodies of the Saints which were thrown in the river Aar, advanced to the bank, stepped out, walked heads in hand, then knelt and prayed at the spot where the Basilica of St. Peter later arose. **The bodies of the martyrs of Aguanum were discovered and identified by Saint Theodore the Bishop of***

Octodurum, who was in office at 350 AD. He built a basilica in their honour at Aguanum, the remains of which are visible today. This later became the center of a monastery built about the year 515 AD on the land donated by King Sigismund of Burgundy.

*Maurice and the Theban Legion became still more important with the rise of the Kingdom of Burgundy. The Burgundians moved into southeast Gaul, as Roman allies, in 443 after crossing the Rhine in 406. Like the other Eastern barbarian tribes, who had been evangelized by Ulfilas in the fourth century, they were Arian rather than catholic Christians. They remained Arian despite numerous attempts to convert them to catholic Christianity. Avitus, catholic bishop of Vienne, attempted to convert the Burgundian king Gundobad in the 490s. Although tradition says that Gundobad favored the catholic faith, he refused baptism by Avitus because the monarch feared his Arian nobles would revolt. His son Sigismund, however, was baptized a catholic around 500, approximately the same time in which Clovis, king of the Franks, became catholic. Since Burgundy was still Arian, Sigismund had to find a way to balance his catholic faith with the political realities of an Arian society. While he tried to placate Clovis by publicizing his catholicism, he never sought to establish catholicism as the state faith. Since the Arians never had any type of monastic establishment, Sigismund could build a monastic base without offending his Arian bishops and aristocracy. In 515, one year before he became king, Sigismund enlarged and renovated the monastery of St. Maurice at Agaunum. Although previously there had been some sort of hospice and community to minister to pilgrims, Sigismund set out to build something unique. Most monasteries originated and grew from disciples attracted to some holy ascetic. That is, once the fame of an ascetic grew, he would attract disciples to his cave or hut. As the numbers grew, an informal community would spring up with its own rules, while a method of worship typically evolved over a period of time. The monastery of St. Maurice, however, would be unique. It would not evolve, but spring up almost fully developed. Between 515 and 521, Sigismund lavishly endowed its foundation and ensured that it would flourish. He spent huge amounts of money to build a sanctuary, and he transferred monks from other Burgundian monasteries to ensure that the liturgy was kept. The liturgy, known as the *laus perennis* (perpetual praise), was imported from Constantinople and was distinctive to the monastery of St. Maurice.*

2b. Here is some further information related to the above account but focusing on Maurice (Mauritius):

source: <http://switzerland.isyours.com/e/guide/valais/stmaurice.html>

About 3km south of Bex, at the point where the narrowing of the Rhône prompted the Romans to build a bridge, is ST-MAURICE, named after the warrior-saint Maurice who is purported to have been martyred nearby. Maurice was ordered in 287 AD by Emperor Maximian to serve against his fellow Christians on campaigns in Gaul, but refused, according to a later chronicler with the words: "We are your soldiers, O Emperor, but we freely acknowledge that we are also the servants of God ... To you is due military

obedience, but to God, justice ... We cannot take up arms to strike pious men, civilians ... We are ready to submit to torture. We declare ourselves Christians." The Emperor duly had the whole legion slaughtered. Today, of course, mighty Maximian is forgotten, while there are apparently 4 cathedrals, 598 churches and 74 towns around the world named after Maurice, not counting two entire countries (Mauritius and Mauritania).

A shrine grew up around the supposed tomb of the saint, hard up against a rocky cliff on the banks of the Rhône, as early as 390, replaced by a monastery in 515; this is still in existence as the oldest surviving abbey north of the Alps. Pilgrims have come to the abbey church for over 1500 years, bringing with them items of gold and silver as homage, and the church treasury holds some exquisitely beautiful pieces, including a Roman sardonyx vase, the intricate gold cloisonné Casket of Teuderic, a breathtaking embossed silver bust of St Candidus and filigreed silver Arm of St Bernard, and other medieval golden caskets and reliquaries of the highest workmanship.

2c. Here is another piece of information. I have added the boldface.

The Catholic Encyclopedia website
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14014d.htm>

Sion (Sedunensis)

A Swiss bishopric, depending directly on the Holy See.

HISTORY

*The Diocese of Sion is the oldest in Switzerland and one of the oldest north of the Alps. At first its see was at Octodurum, now called Martinach, or Martigny. According to tradition there was a Bishop of Octodurum, named Oggerius, as early as A. D. 300. **However, the first authenticated bishop is St. Theodore (d. 391), who was present at the Council of Aquileia in 381¹. On the spot where the Abbey of Saint-Maurice now stands he built a church in honour of St. Mauritius, martyred here about 300. He also induced the hermits of the vicinity to unite in a common life, thus beginning the Abbey of Saint-Maurice, the oldest north of the Alps. Theodore rebuilt the church at Sion, which had been destroyed by Emperor Maximianus at the beginning of the fourth century.***

... and also from the Catholic Encyclopedia, once again with my boldfacing.
source: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01205a.htm>

¹ A council held in 381, presided over by St. Valerian of Aquileia, and attended by thirty-two bishops, among them St. Philastrius of Brescia and St. Justus of Lyons, deposed from their offices certain stubborn partisans of Arius. This council also requested the Emperors Theodosius and Gratian to convene at Alexandria a council of all Catholic bishops in order to put an end to the Meletian Schism at Antioch, since 362 the source of the greatest scandals in the Christian Orient.
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01662a.htm>

Agaunum (Today ST. MAURICE-EN-VALAIS).

*Agaunum, in the diocese of Sion, Switzerland, owes its fame to an event related by St. Eucherius, Bishop of Lyons, the martyrdom of a Roman legion, known as the "Theban Legion", at the beginning of the fourth century. For centuries this martyrdom was accepted as an historical fact, but since the Reformation it has been the subject of long and violent controversies, an exact account of which may be found in the work of Franz Stolle. The sources for the martyrdom of the Thebans are few, consisting of two editions of their "Acts", certain entries in the calendars and in the martyrologies, and the letter of Bishop Eucherius, written in the year 450. To these may be added certain "Passiones" of Theban martyrs, who escaped from the massacre of Agaunum, but who later fell victims to the persecution in Germany and Italy. **It was only in the episcopate of Theodore of Octodurum (369-391), a long time after the occurrence, that attention seems to have been drawn to the massacre of a Roman legion at Agaunum. It was then that, according to St. Eucherius, a basilica was built in honor of the martyrs, whose presence had been made known to Bishop Theodore by means of a revelation.***

2d. Here's the original account written by Eucherius, with pertinent portions boldfaced:
source: <http://www.ucc.ie/milmart/BHL5740.html>

The Passion of St. Maurice and the Theban Legion (BHL 5740)

1. I am unfolding with my pen an account of the suffering of the holy martyrs who light up Acaunum with their glorious blood, with especial faithfulness to the account of the martyrdom which has come down to us, since forgetfulness has not yet overtaken memory of the deed thanks to the report of successive generations. And if those individual places which possess them, or cities even, are distinguished by their individual martyrs, not undeservedly, because the saints pour forth their precious souls for God Most High, in how much awe should we hold that sacred place of the Acaunenses, where so many thousands of martyrs are said to have died by the sword for Christ ? Let me now recount the very cause of their most blessed passion.

2. During the reign of the Maximianus who ruled the Roman republic together with Diocletian as his colleague, crowds of martyrs were tortured or killed throughout various provinces. Furthermore, just as he raged because of his possession by greed, lust, cruelty and other vices, so also in his dedication towards unspeakable rites and his impiety towards the God of heaven did he arm his impiety to extinguish the name of Christianity. So if anyone then dared to confess the worship of the true God, when bands of soldiers were scattered everywhere, they were snatched away for punishment or death, and he set his weapons directly against religion like a foreign soldier at a time of barbarian invasion.

3. *There was at that same time in the army a legion of soldiers who were called the Thebaei . A legion so-called then contained 6,600 men under arms. When they had been summoned to his support by Maximianus from the regions of the East, these men, active in battle and renowned for their courage, although more renowned for their faith, came; they strove in bravery for the emperor, but in devotion to Christ. Mindful of gospel teaching even under arms, they returned that which was God's to God and restored that which was Caesar's to Caesar.*

4. *Accordingly, when these also were assigned to harass the multitude of Christians, just like the other soldiers, they alone dared to refuse the cruel task and declared that they would not obey commands of this kind. Maximianus was not far off, since, tired by his journey, he was resting near Octodurum. When it was reported to him there that this legion was in rebellion against his royal commands and had halted in the pass at Acaunum, he was inspired to indignation and burned with rage.*

5. *But before I report the rest of the story, it seems to me that I ought to include a description of the situation of this place in my account. Acaunus is almost 60 miles from the city of Geneva, and is 14 miles distant from Lake Lemannus into which the Rhone flows. The place itself is situated in a valley among the Alpine peaks and those travelling there find the path narrow and dangerous and the crossing difficult; for the hostile Rhone has left in the foothills of the rocky mountain a ridge which travellers can barely pass. When the narrows of the passes have been conquered and left behind, a not inconsiderable plain is suddenly revealed among the mountain cliffs. It was in this place that the holy legion had halted.*

6. *Accordingly, just as I have said above, when Maximianus learned the reply of the Thebaei , he burned with a fierce anger on account of their neglect of his commands, and ordered every tenth person from that same legion to be executed by the sword in order that others, terrified by fear, might more easily yield to royal injunctions; and he renewed his commands and ordered the remainder to be forced to persecute the Christians. When this repeat command reached the Thebaei, and they learned that impious actions were being enjoined upon the once more, there rose indiscriminately throughout the camp the hue and cry of men declaring that they would never submit to such sacrilegious tasks, that they had always cursed the wickedness of idols, that they had been steeped in the sacred rites and reared in the observation of the divine religion, that they worshipped the one eternal God and that they would suffer death rather than go against the Christian faith.*

7. *When Maximianus learned this next, crueller than any beast, he returned to his natural savagery once more and ordered every tenth man to be executed once more in order that the others might be forced nevertheless to those actions which they were refusing. When these commands were announced at the camp for a second time, the tenth men were chosen by lot, separated, and executed, but the remaining crowd of soldiers urged each other to continue in such a distinguished effort.*

8. But the greatest incitement to faith at that time was the holy Maurice, primicerius, as it is called, of that legion then, who together with campidoctor Exuperius, as they say in the army, and the senator militum Candidus, encouraged [his fellow soldiers] by exhorting and advising them individually. Setting before them the examples of their faithful fellow soldiers, now martyrs, he persuaded them all also to die on behalf of the sacrament of Christ and the divine laws, if it should prove so necessary, and advised them to follow their allies and tentmates who had already preceded them into heaven. For a glorious desire for martyrdom burned in these most blessed men even then.

9. Accordingly, inspired by these leaders and authorities, they sent to Maximianus as he still burned with madness a message as brave as it was pious, which is said to have run in the following vein: "We are your soldiers, O emperor, but God's servants, nevertheless, a fact that we freely confess. We owe military service to you, but just living to Him; from you we have received the pay for our toil, but from Him we have received the origin of life. No way can we follow an emperor in this, a command for us to deny God our Father, especially since our Father is your God and Father, whether you like it or not. Unless we are being forced on a path so destructive that we give offence in this manner, we will still obey you as we have done hitherto; otherwise, we will obey Him rather than you. We offer our hands, which we think wrong to sully with the blood of innocents, against any enemy. Those right hands know how to fight against wicked enemies, not how to torture pious citizens. We remember to take arms for citizens rather than against citizens. We have always fought for justice, piety, and the welfare of the innocent. These have been the prices of our dangers hitherto. We have fought for faith; what faith will we keep with you at all, if we do not exhibit faith to our God? We swore oaths to God first, oaths to the king second; there is no need for you to trust us concerning the second, if we break the first. You order us to seek out Christians for punishment. You do not now have to seek out others on this charge, since you have us here confessing: "We believe in God the Father maker of all and God his Son Jesus Christ." We have seen the allies of our toils and dangers being butchered with iron, and yet we neither wept nor grieved at the deaths of our most holy fellow soldiers and the murder of our brothers, but we praised and rejoiced in them rather, since they had been deemed worthy to suffer for the Lord their God. And this final necessity of life does not now force us into rebellion. That despair which is at its bravest amidst dangers has not even armed us against you, O emperor. Behold! we hold arms and do not resist, because we well prefer to die rather than to live, and choose to perish as innocents rather than to live as criminals. If you ordain any further measure against us, give any further command, or direct any other measure, we are prepared to endure fire, torture, and steel. We confess that we are Christians and cannot persecute Christians.

10. When Maximianus heard these things and realised that the men's minds were resolute in their faith in Christ, despairing that he could recall them from their glorious steadfastness, he decreed in one sentence that they were all to be killed and ordered the surrounding military columns to effect the matter. When these, having been sent, reached the most blessed legion, they drew their wicked swords against the holy men who did not refuse to die because of a love for life. Accordingly, they were indiscriminately slaughtered by the sword. They did not cry out even or fight back, but laid aside their arms and

offered their necks to their persecutors, presenting their throat, or intact body even, to their executioners. Nor were they inspired by their number, or by the protection of their weapons, to attempt to assert the cause of justice by the sword; but remembering this alone, that they were confessing Him who was led to his death without a cry and, like a lamb, did not open his mouth, they, the Lord's flock of sheep so to speak, also allowed themselves to be torn by the onrushing wolves as it were.

11. The earth there was covered by the bodies of the pious as they fell forward into death; rivers of precious blood flowed. What madness has ever effected so great a slaughter of human bodies outside of war ? What ferocity has in the one sentence ordered so many accused to be put to death at the same time ? Their multitude did not obtain the non-punishment of the just, although the wrong which the multitude does usually remains unpunished. Accordingly, that body of saints who despised the present world on account of their hope for the next was executed by the cruelty of a most monstrous tyrant. Thus was slain that quite angelic legion which forever praises the Lord God Sabaoth in heaven, together with the legions of angels, so we believe.

12. The martyr Victor did not belong to the same legion, nor was he a soldier, but a military veteran long discharged. When, during the course of a journey, he suddenly came upon those who were happily and indiscriminately feasting upon the spoils of the martyrs and, having been invited by them to partake with them, had learned in detail from them the cause of their joy, he cursed his hosts and, having cursed them, fled from the feast. When they asked whether he was not also a Christian himself, by any chance, he replied that he was a Christian and would always remain one. They immediately rushed upon him and killed him, and just as he was joined to the other martyrs by his death in the same place, so too he was joined to them in honour.

13. Of that number of martyrs, these names alone are known to us, that is, those of the most blessed Maurice, Exuperius, Candidus, and Victor; the other names are unknown to us, indeed, but they have been written in the book of life.

14. The martyrs Ursus and Victor whom rumour alleges to have suffered at Salodorum are also said to have been from this same legion. Salodorum is a fortress-town above the river Arula, and is situated not far from the Rhine.

15. It is worth reporting also the fate which befell the savage tyrant Maximianus afterwards. When he contrived the death of his son-in-law Constantine, who was then in power, by means of an ambush, his trickery was discovered, he was captured at Marseilles, and was strangled not long afterwards. Punished in this most shameful way, he ended his wicked life with a fitting death.

16. Meanwhile, the bodies of the most blessed martyrs of Acaunum are said to have been revealed to holy Theodore, bishop of the same place, many years after their suffering. I do not think that a miracle which happened then when the basilica, which close at hand now to a large cliff lies inclined to one side, was being built in their honour, ought to be passed over in silence.

17. *It happened that there was a certain workman among the rest of the craftsmen who seemed to have been invited and have gathered for that task whom, it was agreed, was a pagan still. When this man remained alone on the building on the Lord's Day, when the others had departed in order to wait out the festivities of that day, the saints suddenly revealed themselves in a bright light in that lonely place. This workman was seized and stretched out for retribution or punishment even, and seeing the crowd of martyrs made visible, he was scolded and beaten, either because he alone was absent from church on the Lord's Day or because he dared to undertake that holy work of construction even though a pagan. It is agreed that the saints did this so mercifully that, shocked and terrified, that workman demanded the saving name for himself and was immediately made into a Christian.*

18. *Nor should I pass over that one among the saints' miracles which is especially famous and known to all. The wife of Quintus, an excellent and honourable man, when she had been so stricken by paralysis that even the use of her feet was being denied to her, asked her husband to be taken over the long journey to Acaunum. When she arrived there, she was carried into the basilica of the holy martyrs on the hands of her slaves, but returned to her lodging-house on foot, and she herself now reports around the miracle concerning the restoration of health to her paralysed limbs.*

19. *I decided that these two miracles only ought to be included in my account of the passion of the saints. Otherwise, there are many miracles which the power of the Lord works every day there through his saints, either the expulsion of demons or other cures.*

HERE ENDS THE PASSION WHICH IS OBSERVED ON 22 SEPTEMBER.

From Eucherius to the Lord Holy and Most Blessed Bishop in Christ, Salvius.

*I have sent this written account of the passion of our martyrs to your blessedness; for I was afraid lest, through neglect, time should remove from the memory of men the account of so glorious a martyrdom. **Moreover, I have sought the truth of this very matter from suitable sources, especially from those who claimed that they had learned the sequence of the account which I have related from holy Isaac, bishop of Geneva; who, I believe, had learned these things in turn again from the most blessed bishop Theodore, a man of an earlier time.** Accordingly, although others from various places and provinces offer gifts of gold and silver and of other kinds in honour and service of the saints, I offer these writings of mine, if they are deemed worthy of your support, begging in return for these intercession for all my sins and the perennial protection for posterity of my patrons always. Remember me also as you engage before the sight of the Lord in the service of the saints, Lord Holy and deservedly Most Blessed brother.*

2e. Here is an excerpt from a website that further discusses the Abbey of St. Maurice and the Theban Legion. Although he doesn't refer to St. Joder by name until the very end of this account, he refers to Joder as a "local bishop" who discovers the bones, and gives the date of July 5, 386. The website is the online archive of articles in *Focus*, a magazine published by the Union Theological Seminary and Presbyterian School of Christian Education, a school in Richmond, Virginia.

http://www.union-psce.edu/news/Publications/archive/focus_stmaurice.html

***From Diocletian to Lenin and Beyond:
The Continuing Witness of St. Maurice***

by William B. Sweets, Jr.

For most American Protestants, church history is something that begins with the Book of Acts, gets interesting around the Reformation, and ends with last year's church picnic. Church history records days gone by when most people went to church and didn't go shopping on Sundays. Whenever we do think about our history as a people of faith, it is usually a catalog of facts-what missionaries went to what exotic places; how our church reacted to an important national event. Yet history also takes place in the gaps-those places and times we don't know and never think about. It is in one of these gaps in our historical knowledge that we find a group of Swiss monks inspired by an Egyptian martyr from Late Antiquity. With the monks and the martyr, we share a common heritage of faith and an unchanging Savior.

As part of my dissertation research, I spent the month of August 1995 at the Abbey of St. Maurice in southwest Switzerland. I was privileged to be housed in the monastery's guesthouse, use their library, and take my meals with the canons. I also worshipped in the Basilica on Sundays, except for the Sunday I went to Geneva, and I participated in the vigil for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and in the Feast of St. Augustine. In my month in the abbey, I learned that our history as a people of faith has more depth, range, and variety than I ever imagined. Although the Abbey of St. Maurice is Roman Catholic, our history converges within its walls, and its continued witness can give us inspiration for the future. We would do well, therefore, to consider one gap in our historical knowledge and claim that part of our tradition which extends back to a time when Christianity in Europe was struggling. The Abbey of St. Maurice, in the town of St. Maurice in the Valais region of Switzerland, was founded in 515 and is the oldest continually active monastery in Europe. The monks of St. Maurice have maintained their worship, study, and witness since 515-for the last 1,481 years.

Early History of the Abbey

The location of the Abbey of St. Maurice has determined its history, mission, and influence. The abbey is located in the southwest part of Switzerland, about a two-hour train ride from Geneva, on the border between the cantons of the Vaud and Valais. The abbey and surrounding town are nestled between the only pass between the Valaisian and Bernese Alps, in the crook of the "Y" where the two ranges come together. This pass

was made by the erosion of the Rhône River which dominates the entire Valais region. The Rhône presses the town and the monastery against the base of the mountains dictating the placement of buildings and causing periodic rockslides. Astride the pass is the only direct route between northwest and southeast Europe. Soldiers, pilgrims, merchants, and other travelers knew this area well, and the Roman town of Agaunum (in French: Agaune) began to grow up there in the first century B.C. The Romans established a customs house in the middle of the pass and travelers often lingered by its artesian spring. Around 100 B.C. a temple to Mercury, the god of travelers, was erected hard against the mountainside near this spring. The two posts which mark the entrance to the Roman temple are still visible in the excavations behind the abbey's present sanctuary. Offerings to Mercury and water nymphs were made to give thanks for or ensure a safe trip. Evidence indicates that there were priests at this temple who cared for travelers. The Roman temple fell into disuse as Europe became Christianized, but Agaunum remained an important transit point. In fact, there may have been a small Christian community of both men and women offering hospitality to travelers by the fourth century. The local bishop sought, however, for a more organized way to care for travelers while evangelizing this mountainous region. A model for hospitality was already present in the nuns and priests who served the Roman god Mercury. St. Maurice, a local saint, would serve as a bridge between the pagan tradition and the Christian faith.

Maurice and the Theban Legion

In the fall of 285 or winter of 286, several hundred Roman soldiers were massacred for their faith near the present site of the Abbey of St. Maurice. This massacre and the events leading up to it have been recorded in the Passion of the Martyrs of Agaune, written by Bishop Eucherius of Lyon in the late fifth century. According to the Passion, these soldiers were conscripted from the Thebes area of southern Egypt and became known as the "Theban Legion." The area around Thebes has always enjoyed a reputation for its strong, almost fanatical, Christianity. The first monks in the Christian tradition, known as "The Desert Fathers," contained a majority of Thebans, and Theban Christians celebrate many martyrs who have refused to yield their faith to the many persecutions in the first centuries of the church. The fall of 285 was just such a time of persecution: Diocletian and Maximian, co-emperors, had made Christianity illegal. A series of revolts had broken out in Gaul in the spring of 285. Diocletian and Maximian transferred the Theban Legion, among other imperial units, to Gaul in an effort to crush the revolt. Landing near Rome, the Theban Legion marched through northern Italy, across the St. Bernard pass, and encamped near the present-day town of St. Maurice.

Prior to entering Gaul, they were ordered to offer a sacrifice to Maximian. Although these types of offerings were routine, this offering was also tantamount to recognizing the emperor's claim to divinity. The Theban Legion, therefore, refused. According to the Passion, the commanding officer of the legion was named Maurice. He rejected repeated orders to offer sacrifices to the emperor. Moreover, he refused to order his soldiers to make the required offerings. When threatened with death unless he rendered the sacrifice, Maurice replied: O Emperor, we are your soldiers but also, as we are not

afraid to declare, we are the servants of God. To you is due our military service; to Him, our integrity of life. From you we have received our soldier's pay; from Him, entry into eternal life. We cannot obey the Emperor if this means denying God our Creator . . . our first oath was to God, then to Caesar . . . should you order or bring your hand to fire, torture, sword we are prepared to endure it. Christians we declare ourselves to be. According to the Passion, the rest of the Roman army fell upon the Theban Legion and massacred them without resistance.

The Fame of the Theban Legion and St. Maurice

*Although the martyrs of the Theban Legion were known locally and attracted pilgrims almost immediately, it took 100 years for these martyrs to influence the faith of the Western church. **On July 5, 386, the local bishop had a vision in which the remains of the Theban Legion appeared to him. He found the place where tradition said they had been martyred and interred their remains in a new basilica, built on the site of the Roman temple at Agaunum.** A small community continued to attend the needs of travelers, maintain the relics, and spread the gospel. Then the fame of the Theban Legion began to spread rapidly. Tradition tells us that St. Martin traveled to Agaunum in 397 to secure some relics. In return, the future patron saint of France left a sardonyx vase as a show of his devotion. There is also evidence that relics were transported to Lyon and Auxerre in eastern Gaul. It is impossible to understand Christianity in Late Antiquity without relics. Relics were those items, such as bone and cloth, which concretely represented a saint, who was a friend of God. In a hierarchical society, the average believers thought that they needed a patron in heaven, just as everyone needed a patron for representation before the local landowner, judge, or prince. Saints were the ideal patrons because they had been human, but overcame their human sinfulness to live a life of exemplary faith. The relics of the more popular saints were avidly sought after and widely distributed. Since relics were considered to be analogous to the presence of a particular saint, it was thought that God could work miracles through these relics upon the saint's intercession. Thus, healings, exorcisms, and visions were commonly associated with relics.*

*In the era before a strong papacy, saints were usually discovered by local bishops. The first saints in the west, Gervasius and Protasius, were revealed to Ambrose, bishop of Milan, early in 386. St. Maurice, then, became the second holy discovery. The fact that Maurice belonged to the Gallic church is telling. At a time when the influence of Rome was just beginning to be felt, the Gallic hierarchy was fashioning their own form of Christianity-Catholic, but not necessarily Roman. At the same time, however, Maurice is not European. Throughout the centuries the Theban Legion, and Maurice in particular, have largely been represented as black Africans. Maurice is a Coptic name, and the Cross of St. Maurice is a Coptic cross, with trefoil ends. **The relics which Bishop Theodore moved to the spring at Agaunum,** then, represented a stream of Christianity which looked neither to Jerusalem nor to Rome, but to Egypt and Africa.*

3. The following is a poorly translated page from a German website. The website appears to be an archive of saint biographies (hagiographies).

source:

http://www.heiligenlexikon.de/index.htm?BiographienT/Theodor_Teodul_von_Sitten.html

Theodor (Teodul) of customs

Anniversary catholic: 16. August

Regional calendar Basel, Chur, St. Gallen, customs

Name means: God gift (griech.)

Bishop von Sitten

+ end 4. Century in Switzerland

+ in the middle 6. Century in Switzerland

+ end 9. Century in Switzerland



Three bishops of the same name of customs are admired together ritually, without can be decided, which are meant in each case.

The first Theodor, around 350 bishop with seat in Octodurum, the today's Martigny, was the first bishop in the Wallis. It participated 355 to the Synode from Milan² and 381 the Synode of Aquileja³.

The second Theodor participated 519 to the Synode of Agaunum - the today's pc. Maurice -. It found the Gebeine of Mauritius and its companions, under it by Burgunderkoenig Sigismund the abbey pc. Maurice over the graves of Mauritius and its Thebaei Legion was created.

The third Theodor is 805 of Karl, who large ones, which received lay rule over the upper and lower Wallis.

Legends report: Theodor aroused a drowned child to the life. With harvest failures Theodor requested the winegrowers to bring it the empty barrels; it put a berry into each barrel, and the barrels filled. It had received a bell in Rome from the Pope as "weather bell"; a devil, whom he had driven out a possessing, had to carry it for it over the Theodul passport with Zermatt after customs; of these Sittener weather bell small particles were inferred and added to the belt of further weather bells, so that the Fuersprache of the Theodor could be helpful when ringing before a threatening weather.

² A council convened by Emperor Constantius, in which the emperor called for the condemnation of Athanasius, the great foe of Arianism. When the bishops refused, the emperor screamed, "Enough of this foolishness. My will alone is canon law in this matter. The bishops of Syria are not so recalcitrant when I give commands. You either obey or be banished to exile!" Then he drew his sword and swung it around in the air, which struck terror into the hearts of the bishops. Most of them signed the document condemning Athanasius.

³ A council held in 381, presided over by St. Valerian of Aquileia, and attended by thirty-two bishops, removed from office a certain number of Arian bishops, and asked Emperor Theodosius to end a schism that had been happening in Antioch.

The Gebeine of Theodor was destroyed 1798 in the case of the occupation of customs by the Frenchmen.

Patron of the canton Wallis; the winegrower, the bells and the cattle; the weather

Here is a better version of the above. It was done with the aide of Tracy Bartholomew, a former co-worker of mine, and now working for the Germanic Studies Department at the University of Illinois at Chicago. I added a few changes of my own where I felt it was appropriate.

*Theodore (Teodul) of Sitten
Catholic feast day: August 16
Regional calendar of Basel, Chur, St. Gallen, Sitten
Name means: God's gift (Greek)
Bishop of Sitten
+ the end of the 4th century in Switzerland
+ in the middle of the 6th century in Switzerland
+ the end of the 9th century in Switzerland*

Three bishops of the same name (Bishop of Sitten) are honored together; it is impossible to tell in each case which one is meant.

The first Theodore, a bishop with his seat in Octodurum (today's Martigny) around 350, was the first bishop in the Wallis. He participated in the Council of Milan in 355 and in the Council of Aquileia in 381.

The second Theodore participated in the Council of Agaunum (today's St. Maurice) in 519. He found the bones/relics of Mauritius and his companions; under his episcopacy, the St. Maurice abbey was founded by the Burgundian king Sigismund over the graves of Mauritius and his Theban legion.

It is said that the third Theodore in 850 received rule over the upper and lower Wallis from Charlemagne.

Legends say that: Theodor revived a drowned child. When crops failed, Theodor told the winegrowers to bring him the empty barrels. He put a grape into each barrel, and the barrels filled themselves. He received a bell in Rome from the Pope, a "weather bell." A devil, whom he had driven out of a possessed person, had to carry him over the Theodule pass near Zermatt to Sitten. Small pieces from the weather bell were taken and added to other weather bells, so that Theodore's recommendation (blessing or legacy?) could be helpful when the ringing of the bells announced threatening weather.

[My commentary: This leads to some very interesting speculation. The first Theodore is presumably the original St. Joder. The information is interesting because it gives some

dates to work with. The second Theodore is credited with the discovery of the Theban martyrs, but that doesn't jibe with Eucharius and other sources. He is connected, however, with Sigismund and the founding of the abbey. The third Theodore may be the source of the Joder Kappelle paintings that link St. Joder to Charlemagne. As to the legends, I have heard of nothing relating to the drowned child. The legend of the grapes might be connected to St. Joder having a special cask of wine (see Spicer story) and some of the commentary by the Yoder Newsletter editor on the paintings. It is the legend of the bells, however, that adds to the understanding of the "bell & devil" portion of the paintings.]

4. According to an on-line encyclopedia, there is a pass near the famous Matterhorn in eastern Switzerland. Perhaps it has some connection to how St. Joder entered Vallais. http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pennine_Alps From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Pennine Alps

The chief passes of the Pennine Alps, from the Little St Bernard to the Simplon Pass, are: [material omitted] Col de St Theodule (Zermatt to Chatillon), snow 3322 meters (10,899 feet)

The Pennine Alps are the stretch along the border between Switzerland and Italy, more specifically, between Vallais and the Valle D'Aosta region of Italy.

The Little St. Bernard is the most famous pass into Switzerland, and the origin (I believe) of the St. Bernard breed of dog. It would lead directly down into Octodurum/Martigny. The Simplon Pass would lead to the upper reaches of the Rhone, near present day Visp and Brig.

"Col" is a word that means a pass between two mountains or a gap in a ridge. Zermatt is a very exclusive and high end ski resort frequented by the rich and famous. Chatillon is a very small Italian Alpine village. If there is a pass named for St. Joder that lies somewhere between these two points, it would take a person right by the famous Matterhorn, since that is the major mountain right on the international boundary.

5, There is also a mountain named Joderhorn. The Yoder Newsletter Online, Issue 25, 1995 has the following:

<http://www.yodernewsletter.org/YNL/vol25.html>

JODERHORN

by Dr Delbert L Gratz

Who is ready for a climb of the Joderhorn? To be sure there is such a mountain! It forms a segment of the boundary between the countries of Switzerland and Italy.

Nearby Monte Rosa is the highest peak in Switzerland with an elevation of 15,203 feet. Joderhorn is considered its "little brother" and has an elevation of 9,960 feet. [material omitted] Who of you is ready to climb it with me some nice summer day? The climb takes

most of a day. Good hiking shoes are necessary, also a pair of strong legs and lungs- and a ticket to Switzerland! Climbing from the Swiss side, one needs to drive to Saas-Fe and on to the end of the road by a dam. Then it must be about 8 miles of hiking and about 2300 feet elevation gain. From the Italian side one can drive to Domodossola and then into a little valley clear to the end to a place called Macugnaga. From there one can take a cable car to the crest- during certain seasons- and then it should be a walk of about one mile and 700 feet elevation gain.



<http://www.viaalpina.dk/b/ch/bsaas.htm>

This is the end of materials that relate to the Theban martyrs, but there is more relating to the connection between St. Joder and bells.

5. St. Joder and Bells

5a. The following is from a website devoted to lightning. The website is much longer than this excerpt. It touches on something of interest to a possible connection between St. Joder and bells.

<http://www.exploratorium.edu/ronh/weather/weather.html>

In medieval Europe and England, ringing the church bell could be a hazardous occupation. During thunderstorms, it was general practice to ring church bells violently in an effort to keep the lightning from striking the tall church spire. Some felt the clamor of the bells dispersed evil spirits that sought to destroy the church with fire; others claimed that the noise of the bells disrupted the lightning strokes. (The second reason explains the common inscription on medieval bells: Fulgura Frango. which means "I break up the lightning flashes."). During the years from 1753 to 1786, lightning struck 386 French church towers. Lightning running down the bell ropes killed 103 French bell ringers. In 1786, the French government finally outlawed the custom.

5b. Further insight comes from a website devoted to debating and refuting certain aspects of Roman Catholic doctrine. He discusses at length in one essay the rite of baptizing bells, which on the face of it, does seem pretty ridiculous. But in the process of critiquing baptism of bells, it reveals what medieval Christians were hoping bells would do. Here are a couple of paragraphs from a much longer essay entitled *All Good Bells Go to Heaven*:

<http://www.sxws.com/charis/relics5.htm>

paragraph 13:

The ancient pagan worshippers of Semiramis and Tammuz drove demons from their ceremonies by ringing bells. Catholic churches throughout Europe and, I suspect, the rest of the world, use bells to the same purpose. In Basel, there is a bell that bears the inscription, "Ad fugandos demones" (To drive off demons). Another baptized bell, in Lugano, declares "The sound of this bell vanquishes tempests, repels demons, and summons men." Folks in Erfurt are protected from danger by a bell in their cathedral that proclaims that it can "ward off lightning and malignant demons." In the university town of Pont-a-Mousson a bell (dated to 1634) bore the words, "They praise God, put to flight the clouds, affright the demons, and call the people." In that same part of France is another bell that declares, "It is I who dissipate the thunders" (Ego sum qui dissipato nitrua).

paragraph 20:

The Paris ritual for baptizing bells embraces the petition that, "whenever this bell shall sound, it shall drive away the malign influences of the assailing spirits, the horror of their apparitions, the rush of whirlwinds, the stroke of lightning, the harm of thunder, the disasters of storms, and all the spirits of the tempest." Another prayer begs that "the

sound of this bell may put to flight the fiery darts of the enemy of men"; and others vary the form but not the substance of this petition.

5c. Next, here's a part of a website entitled *A Little General History about Bells and Handbells*.

<http://www.handbells.org.au/genhist.htm>

paragraph 3:

When the Christian church was recognized by Constantine in Rome, and came out of hiding, founders began to increase the size of bells and priests hung them on the outside of their churches. Paulinus at Nola in Campania⁴ is supposedly the first to have done this, and from his act derives the words campanile and campanology.

Note the time frame in the above—the post-Constantine era of the 4th century, the very time of St. Joder.

paragraph 5:

In medieval times bells were steeped in superstition. This was probably because of their long association with religion. They were baptized, and once baptized had the power to ward off evil spells and spirits. Bells were hung in doorways to protect visitors and the visited from the evil spirits which always wait around the door awaiting the chance to slip inside. A visitor would ring the bell to drive the spirits away then pass inside - which is the likely origin of the present day doorbell! This custom also led to the "passing bell," which was rung to drive away spirits who stood at the foot of a bed and about the house ready to seize a person's soul as he died. The local ringers who were paid to ring the passing bell were paid more for a big bell than a small one, not because the big one was harder to ring but because it kept the spirits further away and gave the departing soul a better start. The sound of consecrated bells was also believed to dispel thunder and lightning and to calm storms at sea for all of which demons were believed to be responsible. When a tempest broke out bells would be rung in an effort to clear the storm. This happened for example at Sandwich in Kent, in the "great thundering" of 1502 and again in 1514. The "great thundering" was still in use against hail in Southern France in the nineteenth century as it was in Cornwall for those in peril on the sea.

⁴ PAULINUS OF NOLA http://www.scourmont.be/studium/bresard/12-western_mon.html#paulinus

The dates of Paulinus' birth and death are exactly the same as those of Augustine, 354-430. He also was born at Bordeaux of a very rich family, where Christian life was a matter of routine. After his studies, Paulinus began his career as consul and then governor of Campania, in present-day Italy. There, at Nola, he was struck by the miracles which occurred at the tomb of St Felix and his heart was opened to the light of Christ, as he would write later. He married a devout Spanish woman who bore him a son who died very young. Shortly after his baptism, Paulinus and his wife retired to a desert place in Spain. Paulinus planned to return to Nola, and the bishop of Barcelona ordained him priest, perhaps to keep him in Spain. But he persevered in his plans and went back to Nola where he and his wife lived for 35 years, near the tomb of St Felix. Two small communities, one of men and one of women, grew up around them. Paulinus became a bishop. He was a lovable character and kept up a correspondence with Jerome, Rufinus and Augustine. He was neither a theologian nor an exegete, but his writings manifest his spiritual experience. He led a monastic life similar to that of the bishop of Hippo, linked to clerical life; the head of the monastery was also the bishop of the city.

5d. A website that discusses the transition from paganism to Christianity in Scandinavia had this to say:

<http://depts.washington.edu/scand/vikings2.html>

*From Pagan to Christian:
The Story in the 12th-Century Tapestry of the Skog Church,
Hälsingland, Sweden
by Terje Leiren*

paragraph 5:

The Bells

It was generally believed by medieval Scandinavians that bells cleansed the air, purging it of evil spirits. According to Rimbert in his Life of St. Ansgar, church bells were considered unlawful by pagans. Perhaps they frightened the spirits. Christians, of course, had no such qualm; indeed they probably sought to intimidate those very same spirits protected and nurtured by the pagans. Bells, of course, called the faithful to worship, but there was a far stronger symbolism at work. When Gustav Vasa, during the Lutheran Reformation, around 1527, began confiscating church bells for the state treasury, it aroused such indignation that his royal authority itself was threatened and pretenders to the throne began calling for his overthrow.

It is interesting to note the writer asserts it was the pagans who believed the bells would disturb the spirits. This is of course coming the context of Scandinavian pagans, but it might apply to a wider population as well.

I think the connection between the sound of bells and their influence on demons and weather is clear now. The badly translated German site is making more sense when it refers to “weather bells.”

6. This material tries to pin down who the pope might have been that gave SJ a bell.

6a. *Popes during St. Joder's lifetime*

1. *St. Miltiades (311-14)*
2. *St. Sylvester I (314-35)*
3. *St. Marcus (336)*
4. *St. Julius I (337-52)*
5. *Liberius (352-66)*
6. ***St. Damasus I (366-83)***
7. *St. Siricius (384-99)*

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Damasus_I

6b. *Pope Damasus I*

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Damasus I was bishop of Rome from 366 to 383. His father, Antonius, was probably a Spaniard; the name of his mother, Laurentia, was not discovered until the beginning of the 21st century. Damasus seems to have been born at Rome. It is certain that he grew up there in the service of the church of the martyr St. Laurence.

In 366, the death of Liberius led to a division in the church there. One faction supported Ursinus, while the other supported Damasus. This dissension climaxed with a riot which led to the deaths of 137 people and the rare intervention of Emperor Valentinian I to uphold public order. Damasus prevailed, but only with the support of the city prefect. He was also accused of murder before a later prefect, but his rich friends secured the personal intervention of the emperor to rescue him from this humiliation. The reputations of both Damasus and the Roman church in general suffered greatly due to these two unseemly incidents.

Many in both pagan and Christian society saw in Damasus a man whose worldly ambitions outweighed his pastoral concerns. His entertainments were infamous for their lavishness. A wealthy aristocrat called Praetextatus, who was a priest in the cults of numerous gods, is reputed to have said jokingly to Damasus, "Make me bishop of Rome and I will become a Christian". Some of his critics used to call him "The ladies' ear-tickler". An accusation of adultery was laid against him in 378 in the imperial court, but he was exonerated by Emperor Gratianus himself.

Damasus is notable for his association with Jerome of Dalmatia. He encouraged the highly respected scholar to revise the available Old Latin versions of the Bible into the contemporary Latin (hence Vulgate, the "vulgar" language). He also contributed greatly to the liturgical and aesthetic enrichment of the city churches. He employed a calligrapher, one Dionysius Philocalus, to adorn the shrines of martyrs and Roman bishops with epigrams.

These ceremonial embellishments and the emphasis on the Roman legacy of Peter and Paul amounted to a general claim to the Roman upper classes that the real glory of Rome was Christian and not pagan. All this made it more socially acceptable for the upper classes to convert to Christianity. Often, the women of the family were the first to abandon pagan ways, while the men tended to hold on to them longer, being generally more conservative in their idealized views on the greatness of the Empire. This was often more for aesthetic and antiquarian reasons, rather than strictly religious ones. To these elegant, austere citizens, the pagan zeal of the previous Emperor, Julian was an embarrassment nearly as grating as that of any Christian evangelist.

Damasus was the first bishop of Rome to invoke the "Petrine text" (Matthew 16:18) in terms that sought to establish a serious theological and scriptural foundation on which the primacy of the Roman church could be based. From Damasus onwards, there is a marked increase in the volume and importance of claims of authority and primacy from the Roman bishops.

Damasus spoke of Rome in terms of the "apostolic see", as his predecessor Liberius had also done. This is one of the most noteworthy qualities of his reign, as it allowed him to emphasize his powerful apostolic inheritance. His reign is also one of the more important landmarks in the progression towards the development of the Papacy proper.

6c

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope>

The Title

The word pope (post-classical Latin papa, father), is an ecclesiastical title now used to designate the head of the Roman Catholic Church and several Patriarchs of eastern Orthodoxy, such as the Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and the head of the Coptic Orthodox Church. In the 4th and 5th centuries it was frequently used in the west of any bishop, but in the Catholic church it gradually came to be reserved to the bishop of Rome, becoming his official title. In the East, on the other hand, the Patriarch of Alexandria uses it as his historical title.

As a popular term it was applied to priests, and at the present day, in the Greek Church and in Russia all the priests are called pappas, which is also translated "pope".

Catholic Encyclopedia

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12260a.htm#V>

(1) Titles

The most noteworthy of the titles are Papa, Summus Pontifex, Pontifex Maximus, Servus servorum Dei. The title pope (papa) was, as has been stated, at one time employed with far more latitude. In the East it has always been used to designate simple priests. In the Western Church, however, it seems from the beginning to have been restricted to bishops (Tertullian, "De Pud." 13). It was apparently in the fourth century that it began to become a distinctive title of the Roman Pontiff. Pope Siricius (d. 398) seems so to use it (Ep. vi in P. L., XIII, 1164), and Ennodius of Pavia (d. 473) employs it still more clearly in this sense in a letter to Pope Symmachus (P. L., LXIII, 69). Yet as late as the seventh century St. Gall (d. 640) addresses Desiderius of Cahors as papa (P. L., LXXXVII, 265). Gregory VII finally prescribed that it should be confined to the successors of Peter.

6d.

Ecclesiology: A Study in Church History <http://www.mcauley.acu.edu.au/~yuri/ecc/>
Table of Contents

1. *From Jesus to the End of the 1st Century*
2. *The 2nd and 3rd Century*

3. The 4th and 5th Century

<http://www.mcauley.acu.edu.au/~yuri/ecc/mod3.html>

THE GROWING AUTHORITY OF THE ROMAN BISHOPS

The period following the four Church councils at Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon saw the Church coming to ascendancy. Instead of its being persecuted, it became dominant, and the relationship between Church and State was accelerated, based on mutual needs and concerns.

Eusebius, in his writings on "Church History", stresses an inter-dependence of Church and State often interweaving accounts and political affairs of State with issues that related to ecclesial matters. The emperors had converted to Christianity and in so doing, it obligated them to offer the Church protection and support even to the point of convening synods to quell internal dissent and theological heresy (Schaff, 1979).

As the ruler empowered from above, Constantine viewed himself as the protector of the Church. He labored on its behalf, making evident his intention to make Christianity the preferred religion of the empire. In his mind, the bishops were commissioned to care for the inner life of the Church, while he cared for the external affairs. It was his verdict that if the Church was to be of the greatest assistance of the empire, it must be united. Its policies, activities, teachings and liturgy were being influenced more by political necessity than by the Gospels.

There appeared at this time to be a growing conviction that bishops were more than officers charged with caring for the Church, governing its affairs and defending it against internal and external threats. They were viewed as having a special sacred character which separated them from the community as a whole. They were not longer simply representatives of the people. In time, the priest presiding at the Eucharist was no longer viewed as the offerer of the prayers of the community but as another Christ making sacrifices for the sake of the people. This development indeed illuminates the conditions of the time and makes apparent, the Church was on the road to institutionalization characterized by a distinct hierarchy, and it appears that this situation was necessary for the continuance and welfare of the community.

Christianity had become in many striking ways a mirror image of the empire itself. It was catholic, universal, orderly, multi-racial and increasingly legalistic. It was administered by a professional class of literates, wealthy landowners, urban bourgeoisie who functioned like bureaucrats, and its bishops like imperial governors. It appeared to be a marriage of convenience between State and Church.

In an epistle from Constantine to the clergy in which the emperor commands that the rulers of the Church be exempted from all political duties, it appears that the emperor attempted to diffuse the clergy and get them on side in order to exercise some power over them. He also began to transfer other privileges to the Christian clergy, which implies a class status situation. Later Emperor Theodosius strove to establish and maintain a unified society also, which was to be the centre of the Christian faith. To

achieve this, he exerted authority in and over the Church, for it was inconceivable to him, as emperor, that the emperor's should be independent of imperial power.

*The bishop of the Roman community continued to see his role, as the successor of Peter, to be responsible for the unity and purity of the Christian faith. Deference was paid to the bishop of Rome by the bishops of Asia Minor, Spain, North Africa; Synods respected the politics shaped and implemented within Rome. **This was recognized by the State and emperor Gratian (375-378 AD) in 378 AD passed a State law which acknowledged the pre-eminence of the Pontiff in relation to all other bishops. In that same year, Pope Damasus I (366-384 AD) held a Synod "at the sublime and holy Apostolic See". It was to be the first time that the Roman Church was addressed in this manner. A new consciousness began to arise that the power and primary of the Roman bishop echoed the words of the Lord and Savior: "You are Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my Church" (Mt. 16:18).***

Under Damasus, the liturgy became more elaborate and formalized. Latin was taken over from the secular world and introduced as the language of the liturgy, replacing Greek; the use of colorful vestments, gold and silver ornaments, incense and candles became commonly associated with the pomp and pageantry of worship.

Under Damasus' secretary, Jerome, the Old and New Testaments were translated into Latin (Vulgate). By the end of the fifth century the Church had become the main religion in the empire.

6e

Christian History Institute

<http://www.gospelcom.net/chi/DAILYF/2002/10/daily-10-26-2002.shtml>

What Happened this Day in Church History

October 26, 366 • Rivals Battle in a Sanctuary to Be Pope

In October, 366, Rome was in an uproar. When Bishop Liberius of Rome died in September, 366, there was no system, such as a College of Cardinals, to elect a new pope (although they were not yet known as popes). By a large majority, the people and clergy of Rome chose Damasus, a sixty-year-old deacon, to be their next bishop. He was consecrated by three other bishops, including the Bishop of Ostia, which was all according to tradition. There is no doubt that Damasus was the properly chosen successor to Liberius.

But Liberius had spent time in exile for resisting Arianism, a theology that denied the divinity of Christ. He was very popular for this taking stand. Commoners and high ranking Romans alike agitated for his return. During his exile, Felix II (an anti-pope) ruled as Bishop of Rome. Damasus served under Felix. Later, Liberius was restored to his old position by Emperor Constantinius--after he agreed to show favor to the Arian heresy. (This caused Bishop Hilary of Poitiers to declare "A curse on you, Liberius.") Some followers of Liberius were unhappy to see a man who once

supported Felix sitting in Liberius' place. They chose Ursinus to be the bishop. An old Bishop from Tibur consecrated Ursinus.

Followers of Ursinus resorted to violence in their effort to put him in place of Damasus. Damasus appealed to Juventius, Prefect of Rome (a high ranking magistrate). The Prefect ordered Ursinus out of town. Ursinus left, but his followers did not lay down their arms. Damasus gathered men, armed them and attacked his rival's forces, who took refuge in the Liberian Basilica (a Roman church later called St. Mary Major). A three-day battle followed. The supporters of Damasus assaulted the building from the street and also climbed onto the roof, which they tore open, flinging stones onto the men trapped below.

On this day, October 26, 366, Damasus won. His followers captured the church, leaving one hundred and thirty seven followers of Ursinus dead on its floor.

Damasus still faced opposition. To protect himself, he hired gladiators as bodyguards. His opponents not only attempted to overthrow him by violence, but also by accusations of serious sin. The emperor intervened and cleared Damasus of the charges whatever they were (the record is not clear). A council at Rome in 378 and another in Aquileia in 381 both declared that Damasus was the true bishop.

When the trouble simmered down, Damasus became a great promoter of martyrs. He restored tombs, rebuilt churches and wrote poems about saints who had died because of their testimony for Christ.

He was an enemy of the Arian heresy and put some Arian bishops out of the church. He issued twenty-four anathemas (curses) against false teachings about the Trinity and Christ. However, Damasus is best remembered because he issued an official list of the books which belong in the Bible. He persuaded his friend and secretary, Jerome, to make a new Latin translation of the Bible, which Jerome did. This was the Vulgate, the Bible of the Middle Ages.

Despite the rough circumstances surrounding his election, Damasus was highly regarded by other Christian leaders of his day, many of whom spoke of him in terms of high praise.

Sources:

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- 2. Butler, Alban. The Lives or the Fathers, Martyrs and Other Principal Saints. [From the Eternal Word Network web site]*
- 3. Friend, W. H. C. The Early Church. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965.)*
- 4. Gibbon, Edward. Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. (Britannica Great Books.) [The date is confirmed on page 170]*
- 5. Keck, Karen Rae. "Damasus I." The Ecole Glossary.*
- 6. Shahan, Thomas J. "Pope St. Damasus I" in the Catholic Encyclopedia. **Din***

7. Timelines

World History Timelines

http://din-timelines.com/0350-0399_timeline.shtml

350

The Codex Vaticanis and Sinaiticus were written.

358

Huns invade Europe.

360

Books are replacing scrolls. About this time Japanese Empress Jingo takes over at the death of her husband, Emperor Chuai.

362

Julian the Apostate allows Jews to resettle in Jerusalem.

363

Persians capture Mesopotamia.

370

The Goths divide into two groups. The Ostrogoths live east of the Dneestr River, on the shores of the Black Sea. The Visigoths live on the land from the Dneestr to the Danube.

376

The Huns threaten the Visigoths, and the Visigoths seek protection from Roman Emperor Valens. The Emperor permits them to settle south of the Danube, in Moesia.

378

The Visigoths successfully rebel against the treatment they receive from the Roman soldiers.

379

Theodosius the Great becomes the Roman Emperor of the East.

381

The First Council of Constantinople, the second ecumenical council, is convened at the request of Theodosius the Great, Emperor of the East. They condemned various religious sects and reaffirmed the decisions of the First Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 325.

382

Theodosius the Great, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, makes peace with the Goths, permitting them to live within his empire as long as they serve in his army. The first Council of Rome at which was the first attempt to create a Canon Bible.

383

Gratian, the Roman Emperor of the West is murdered.

Magnus Maximus, a Spaniard, was proclaimed Emperor in Britain by the island's Roman garrison. With an army of British volunteers, he quickly conquered Gaul, Spain and Italy.

Jerome's first Latin Bible, The Vulgate

388

Magnus Clements Maximus, Emperor of the West except for Italy, invades Italy.

Theodosius the Great, Emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire defeats Maximus and restores Valentinian II as Roman Emperor of the West.

389

Birth of Saint Patrick.

390

Theodosius the Great orders the massacre of 7000 insurgent citizens of Thessaloniki, Greece, and is excommunicated by Bishop Ambrose of Milan.

392

Roman general Arbogast murders Valentinian II of the West and sets up Eugenius as ruler.

393

The Council of Hippo and the reaffirmation of Biblical Canon

394

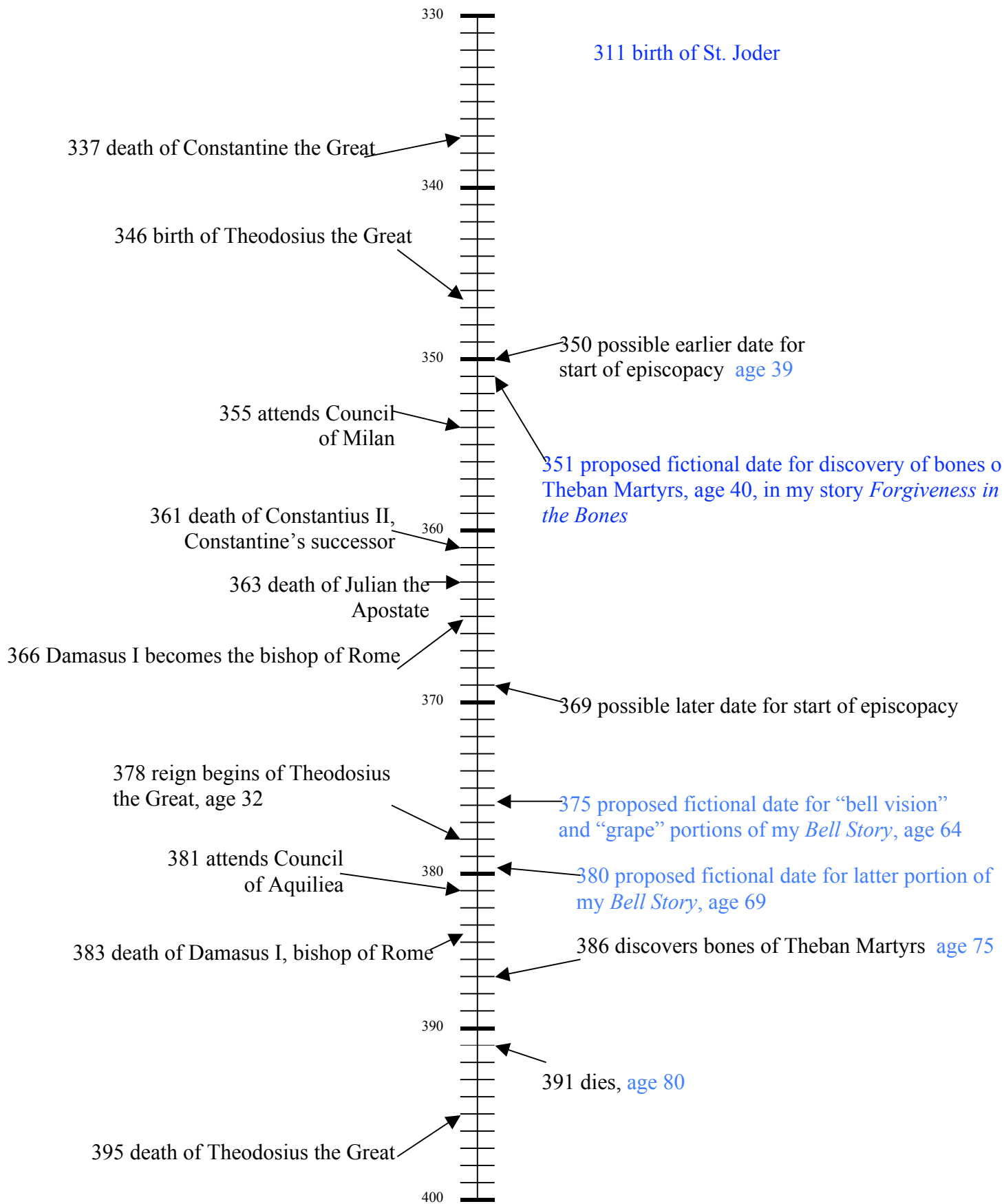
Eastern Emperor Theodosius the Great defeats Eugenius and becomes ruler of a united Roman Empire.

395

Roman Emperor Theodosius dies. His sons Arcadius becomes emperor in the East and Flavius Honorius becomes emperor in the West. The Visigoths renounce their allegiance to Rome and acknowledge Alaric as king.

8. Timeline for St. Joder's life

Dates from online sources are in black. My own fictional dates and information are in blue.



9. From the book *13 Jolly Saints* by Dorothy Gladys Spicer ©1970

Chapter 3 “The Bishop’s Bell” (Switzerland)

The first Bishop—and the Patron Saint—of Sitten, in the Swiss Valais, was the holy Théodule. He lived in the fourth century, in a palace perched like a bird on one of two hillocks around which town sprawls. From that height the view of the countryside is splendid, the air like new wind and God seems close even to sinners. That’s one reason why Saint Théodule, and the Bishops who followed him, loved the ancient town. For nigh sixteen centuries, Sitten has remained the see of the Bishops of Valais.

But pious though most of these Bishops were, none was so pious, generous—or half so brave—as “Bishop Joder,” as Sitten’s inhabitants, from the greatest to the least, affectionately nicknamed their Patron, Théodule. To this day, they declare, “Bishops have come and Bishops gone, but Bishop Joder was the holiest of all.”

Then the townsfolk go on to tell of the keg in his palace cellar. No one knew whence the keg came, or what manner of grape produced wine of such ruby redness, aroma and delicate flavor as it contained. Yet everyone agreed there was something strange about both the keg and the wine.

When Bishop Joder filled a goblet and offered it to a beggar, stranger or ragged wayfarer at the door, he always said, “Drink this, my friend. It will bless you and give you strength.”

And so it seemed, for when a man—no matter how bedraggled—walked from the palace, he seemed to stand taller, his step was brisker and more courage shone from his eye than when he arrived.

But that wasn’t all. As the Bishop’s scullery maid confided one day to the cook, “No matter how much his Grace draws from the keg, there is always wine left.”

“And what might you expect, from one so holy as Bishop Joder?” asked the cook tartly, peering at the girl.

Time plays strange tricks on people’s memories, and after fifteen hundred years they have forgotten much about Bishop Joder. But one thing everyone in Sitten, and the entire Valais, remembers to this day. That is what happened the night of his dream.

That night, when the Bishop retired, he was sorely troubled, though why he didn’t know. He’d said his prayers, confessed his sins and examined his conscience a dozen times, yet he found no peace. He tossed for hours, first this side, then that. But the more he tried to sleep, the more elusive sleep was.

At last, weary and discouraged, the Saint counted backward from one hundred to one. “One hundred, ninety-seven, seventy—“ he droned wearily. He’d just counted back to one for the seventh time, when he began to feel drowsy.

The Bishop drifted into uneasy slumber. It was then he beheld the white-clad Angel, with glistening wings and face like the sun. “Sleep not, Théodule,” commanded the Radiant One, addressing the Bishop by his given name. “God bids you rise, journey to Rome at once and warn His Holiness, the Blessed Pope, of danger. This very night a foe seeks to take his life.”

“But—but how can I get to Rome in time?” cried the Bishop, sitting up in bed. He glanced wildly about, but saw no one. The Angel had vanished. Moonlight flooded the room with eerie brightness. It was only a dream, he told himself. Yet thinking of the Holy Father banished all thought of sleep.

Dazed and confused, the Saint sprang from bed, ran to the window and peered at the moon, now bright as a golden ducat and round as a cheese. Even if the dream were real, how could he reach Rome and warn the Pope? “Dear Heaven, show me a way,” he murmured, as the chimes in the church tower began to strike midnight.

The last stroke had barely sounded when Bishop Joder heard shrill squeals from overhead. Glancing up, his blood froze with horror. For there, silhouetted against the moon, danced three ugly Devils, with horns on their heads, leathery wings and cleft hooves on the long nimble legs. With joyous shrieks they capered, cavorted and pinched one another’s tails.

Watching their grotesque antics, the Bishop’s horror gave way to anger. “Have I preached so long, and so badly, Devils dare sport above our city?” he cried, his eyes flashing.

But the next instant the Bishop’s face blanched. “Heaven has shown me a way,” he whispered, moistening his lips. “May God give me strength to follow it,” he added slowly, a desperate plan taking shape in his mind—a plan so daring it couldn’t fail.

Though by now his heart pounded, the Bishop stuck his head from the window, cupped his hands and shouted, “Ho, you Devils up there, come here. I have work for you.”

*“**Work for us!**” shouted the Devils, snickering and nudging one another. Hadn’t King Satan himself long ago offered honor, promotion—and seven bags of gold—to any Demon who snared the pie-faced Bishop’s soul, dragged it to Hell and delivered it? With noisy chortles, eyes bulging with greed and heavy wings rattling, the swarthy fellows swooped downward and settled at the Bishop’s window ledge. “What do you want, old man?” the Oldest Devil asked in a gravelly voice.*

“I want to know which of you travels the fastest,” replied the Bishop matter-of-factly.

“Ho ho, that’s easy! I do,” the Youngest shouted, shoving his companions aside. “I travel faster than wind in a gale.”

“As if that were anything!” shrilled the Middle Devil, poking the Youngest in the ribs. “I travel faster than thought.”

The Oldest Devil gave his tail an impatient flick. “You call that fast?” he rasped witheringly. “I travel around the world faster than an old woman can change her mind.”

“Then you’re the Devil for me—if you’ll do what I want,” said the Bishop, struggling to keep his voice steady. And at his words, the younger Demons, knowing their prey was lost, rose in high dudgeon and flapped away into the night.

The Oldest Devil’s eyes glittered. “There’s nothing I’ll not do—for a soul,” he grated.

“Then we’ll bargain,” said the Bishop, with more confidence than he felt. “If you take me to Rome—to deliver a message to the Pope—bring me back and set me down, before cockcrow, on the hill below the palace, I’ll give you my soul. But if not—” he went on, a crafty light in his eyes.

“If not, ha, ha,” chortled the Devil, rubbing his bony hands in glee. “Why, your wretched soul’s mine already, old man!”

Not heeding the interruption, the Bishop continued. “If not, you’ll promise to leave Sitten forever.”

The Devil scratched his head. “Yes, yes, I promise, old man. I’ll set you down before cockcrow, never fear,” he cried and glanced at the moon. “But if I’m to lug you all the way to Rome and back—and then all the way to Hell—there’s no time to spare.”

“I’ll be ready at once,” said the Bishop with a show of haste. “But since a bargain’s a bargain—and to be sure everything’s fair on both sides—we must decide about the cocks.”

“Cocks, eh?” The Devil switched his tail. “What’s to decide?” he demanded suspiciously.

“Before we take off, each of us must fetch his own rooster and set him, still asleep, on a high perch that overlooks the city,” said the Bishop, his voice smooth as silk. “That way, when the birds crow together, we’ll know neither has cheated the other.”

From the first, the Devil did not fancy the notion. But after he’d roared, threatened and declared Devils were the only ones to set down conditions—and the old man refused to budge unless he had his way—he gave reluctant consent to the plan.

“Have it your way, for all the good it will do,” the Demon snarled. “I’ll fetch my cock, you fetch yours, and no tricks, mind you.”

Shortly thereafter, the Bishop—now attired in his best cope and jeweled miter—was whizzing through the air on the Devil’s back. The old man smiled in his beard as he glimpsed in the moonlight Satan’s black rumped cock. There he huddled, on the broad ledge of the town wall, sound asleep.

On the other hand, the Saint’s faithful pet rooster—snow-white and shining like satin—turned and twisted uneasily atop the church steeple. Fearful of tumbling and mindful of his master’s whispered command, “Do not sleep, little one, do not sleep,” the bird dared close but one eye at a time.

“Hold tight, Bishop,” the Devil shouted over his shoulder as his leathery wings slip-slapped the air. “We’ll be in Rome quicker than an old woman can decide whether to wear an old cap or a new.”

And the Devil was right. For in less than no time, or so it seemed to Bishop Joder, he’d skimmed over forest, deep gorges and the highest Alpine peaks. And then, in the flick of an eyelash, he slackened his speed, dropped to earth and landed below the Pope’s sleeping chamber.

“Well, here you are,” chuckled Satan, helping Bishop Joder from his back. “I’ll toss you through the window, stay here and, after your chitchat with the Pope, remember, I’ll be waiting to take you home,” he ended, his eyes round and bright as the moon.

A thin smile played over the Bishop’s lips. “As if I’d be likely to forget our pact,” said he.

Once the Bishop had roused the Pope, delivered his message and told how he had journeyed to Rome, His Holiness acted at once. He summoned the guards, had the palace searched and his enemy found—and thrown into a dungeon.

Then the Holy Father turned to Bishop Joder, embraced him as a son and said, "Greater love hath no man than to risk his own soul for the sake of saving another."

And because of his boundless gratitude, the Pope gave the Bishop a bronze bell possessed of strange properties. "It will banish evil," the good Father promised. "When the bell rings in the belfry, the sound of its voice will protect the folk of Sitten from harm." And so saying, he blessed his guest, thanked him once more and bade him Godspeed.

When the Devil discovered he was expected to take both the Bishop and the bell back to Sitten, his eyes flared and he hopped in rage. He was about to snarl that Devils weren't beast of burden, like donkeys, when he thought better of it. Considering the richness of the soul now all but in his clutches—and the reward for its delivery—he could afford to be generous! So he hoisted the old one to his back, clutched the bell upside down, by the clapper, and warmed up his wings. "You'll not hear it ring, now or ever, mind you," said Satan meanly. "You'll be in Hell before it does."

"Unless the cocks crow," the Bishop reminded him slyly.

"The cocks, ho, ho, I'd not count on them!" The Devil chuckled, and took off in such a hurry the Bishop grabbed at his ear. And now Satan traveled back to Sitten faster than he'd come to Rome. Like a homing bird, he flapped his heavy wings and—though the moon had set, the stars vanished and his burden was great—he flew at dizzy speed high above mountains, villages and bottomless ravines.

When at last they approached Sitten, it was yet dark, the townsfolk asleep and cockcrow an hour hence. While still afar, the Devil could see the dim motionless figure of his rooster, huddled like a bundle of rags on the wall. "He's not stirred since we left," he gloated. "How's that, old man? Are you willing to admit I've won honest and fair?"

"You've not landed—yet," said the Bishop, his eyes fixed on the white blob on top of the steeple. When the blob stirred, teetered an instant and twisted this way, then that, he clasped his hands and his lips formed the soundless words, "Crow, little one, crow. Don't fail me."

And the white cock didn't fail his master. For just as the Devil wheeled, shouted with triumph and began to catapult toward earth, the creature jerked open both eyes. Then he flapped his wings, craned his satiny neck and crowed, "Cock-a doodle-do, Cock-a-doodle-doo, COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO-OOO," so gustily he wakened the Devil's rooster.

And the black bird, not intending to be outdone, flapped his wings and crowed, "COCK-A-DOODLE-DOOO," so raucously the startled townsfolk tumbled from bed.

Meanwhile, the rage of the rooster's master, the Devil, whose hooves had all but touched earth, was dreadful. Already the Bishop had leaped from his back, and was thanking God on his knees for his deliverance, when Satan screamed, "You mealymouthed swindler—you and your white-livered cock! You've cheated me of your Soul, but I'll destroy you."

So saying, the Devil lifted the bell high in his long skinny arms, took careful aim and hurled with all his strength.

But the bell missed the Bishop's head. It shot beyond its target, dug into the earth and made a hole full seven fathoms deep. Only then did the Devil realize the magic power of the blessed bell. Uttering a yell so despairing it brought the rumped rooster to his shoulder, he tried the escape the wrath of the awful thing. But he was too late. Even

before Satan had time to spread his wings, thunder rolled through the graying sky, lightning zigzagged, and the next instant, both he and his cock lay like limp ugly rags on the ground. Amid howls, shrieks and screams for mercy, flames rose and lapped around their bodies. Smoke billowed above them. There was a smell of sulfur—and then silence—as the sun rose and light flooded the scene.

As the townsfolk poured from their houses and rushed toward the hill, they saw their Bishop, arrayed in his best miter and cope, standing beside a great hole in the earth. He stretched out his hand and they heard him say, “Arise, blessed bell. Arise, take your place and ring.”

The people gasped in wonder and awe. Some sank to their knees. For now the bell rose. From seven fathoms down, it floated up and up. Only when it reached the belfry did it stop. There, wonder of wonders, it settled into a space that seemed to receive it. And then the bell chimed.

“A miracle, a miracle!” gasped the inhabitants, gazing first at the bell, then at their Bishop.

A miracle indeed,” the old man said, his face radiant as the new-risen sun. “His holiness, the Pope of Rom, sends you the bell. Already it has destroyed the Devil’s power and delivered my soul. The bell will ward off evil and protect this town from harm.”

Then the Saint went on to describe the events of the night. Beginning with his dream, the Angel’s command—and the pact he, their Bishop, made with the Devil—he spared no detail, nor did he try to spare himself. “Thanks to the Pope’s blessing, his holy will—and my white cock—“ he concluded, “Devils never again will dance in the moonlight above Sitten.”

And they never have—not, at least, for the sixteen hundred years since the events in this story took place. “Saint Joder’s bell,” the inhabitants of Sitten named the Pope’s gift, in honor of their beloved Bishop.

“It brought luck,” the townsfolk declare to this day. “In time of danger or storm, it rang of its own accord.” The bell, alas, has long since disappeared. But when you ask about Sitten’s first Bishop and Patron—known to the world outside as Saint Théodule—the inhabitants smile affectionately. “For many a year, he and his faithful white pet cock lived happily in the palace on the hill. Bishops have come and Bishops gone, but never was there a holier man than our Bishop Joder.”

Differences between Spicer's story and mine—

My story--

- incorporates material from the paintings—St. Joder overhears the demons' plans, the bell is cracked or broken but St. Joder wins anyway—and material from the German website—something about a miracle of grapes and wine, and three demons that St. Joder had cast out of someone
- ties the miraculous wine to the demon part of the story
- incorporates all three demons into the transportation of the bell—each with a different ability—flying, carrying and thinking
- has no palace, no cook, no scullion, no jeweled miter or “cope” (cloak?), no steeple, no chimes
- says when the demons throw the bell at St. Joder, it shatters, but St. Joder “heals” the pieces, restoring it to wholeness
- says the ringing of the bell is what finally drives off the demons for good when they refuse to honor their pledge to stay away