

Eucharistic Miracle of SAINT EGIDIO

FRANCE

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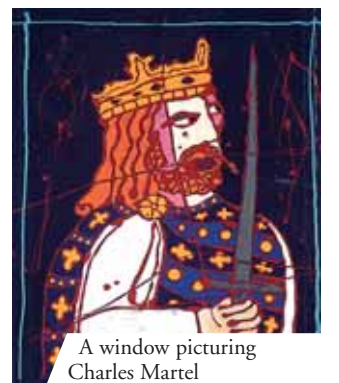
Saint Egidio and the Faun



The Mass of St. Egidio in the presence of Charles Martel, National Gallery of London



Charles of Steuben, The Battle of Poitiers



A window picturing Charles Martel



Jean-Honoré Gonon. The Battle of Charles Martel and Abd-er-Rahman, King of the Saracens

Prior to the victory celebration over the Saracens at Poitiers, Charles Martel had committed the grave sin of incest with his sister. Stricken by remorse, he did not dare confess the sin, so vile was the committed act. He decided therefore to go to Provenza and present himself to a well-known abbot of the time named Egidio, in order to seek absolution for this sin, without actually confessing it and while keeping the crime committed a secret. Saint Egidio was officiating at a Mass, when an angel appeared and placed himself near the altar, carrying in his hand a book in which was written the unconfessed fault. As the celebration continued, the writing in the book faded little by little until it completely disappeared, and Charles Martel felt himself absolved. The story of this sin and miraculous absolution was so

famous that popular fervor often attributed it to Charlemagne, and not to Charles Martel, as if the real participant were not sufficiently authoritative.

The notoriety of Saint Egidio was well established even before performing this miracle. Originally from Athens, he had retreated to a hermitage in a forest of Gard, where a fawn visited him daily to nourish him with her own milk. One day while hunting, the King of the Visigoths followed the animal to the threshold of the grotto where the hermit lived and shot the fawn. In order to correct the sacrilege he had committed, the king had a great monastery built which would take the name of St. Gilles-du-Gard, and which would become an important stop along

the path of the pilgrims going to Compostela, before itself becoming a place of pilgrimage. Saint Egidio has been invoked for help with difficult confessions.