

Saints Cornelius and Cyprian 16 September



About Saints Cornelius and Cyprian

Pope St Cornelius (d. 253)

Cornelius was elected pope in Rome in the year 251. He fought against the Novatian schismatics and established his authority with the aid of Cyprian. Together with Cyprian he defended the power of the Church to reconcile those who had lapsed under persecution. He decided that those Christians who renounced their faith under the persecution of the Roman authorities should be welcomed back into the Church. With a compassionate heart, Cornelius declared that those individuals could return to the Church after a period of penance.

The emperor Gallus sent him into exile, and he died at Civitavecchia in June 253. He is buried in Rome.

St Cyprian (210 - 258)

Saint Cyprian was born in Carthage and spent most of his life practicing law. He converted to Christianity and was made bishop of Carthage in the year 249. He guided the Church through difficult times, including the persecution of the Emperor Decius, when Cyprian was forced into hiding to be able to continue his ministry. In the year 258 the persecution of the Emperor Valerian began. Cyprian was exiled and was executed on 14 September of that year.

How do the lives of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian apply to our lives today?

Both these men suffered a martyr's death, but they remained constant in their faith in Christ and did not let troubling times prevent them from fulfilling their priestly ministry, offering pastoral care and support to people or doing good.

Saint Cyprian's trial was noted for the calm and courtesy displayed on both sides. Even in the time of trial, Cyprian remained calm.

Both these men realized that we are not perfect and sometimes we fail. They recognized that forgiveness and reconciliation are a necessary part of belonging to the Church and their actions certainly displayed their positive attitude towards members of the flock.

May we pray for those who persecute us and never cease trying to do good for others.

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Collect

O God, who gave Saints Cornelius and Cyprian to your people as diligent shepherds and valiant Martyrs, grant that through their intercession we may be strengthened in faith and constancy and spend ourselves without reserve for the unity of the Church. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel

John 17:11-19

Father, keep those you have given me true to your name

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

'Holy Father,

keep those you have given me true to your name, so that they may be one like us.

While I was with them, I kept those you had given me true to your name.

I have watched over them and not one is lost except the one who chose to be lost,

and this was to fulfil the scriptures. But now I am coming to you and while still in the world I say

these things to share my joy with them to the full. I passed your word on to them,

and the world hated them, because they belong to the world no more than I belong to the world.

I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the evil one.

They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world.

Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth.

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world,

and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in truth.'

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Antiphon

It is you who have stood by me in my trials; and I confer a kingdom on you, says the Lord, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.

Hymn for the Memorial of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian

Praise to the Lord for Saints Cornelius and Cyprian.
Serving Him with joy - they died to self-time and time again.
With a red crown –
martyrs to the Christian faith
serving Him, not counting their pain.

*This man Cornelius, you chose to lead your flock on earth:
reconciling the apostates and giving them new birth.
Welcoming them,
the wayward and the lost sheep,
seeing in each one their true worth.*

Lord, you chose Cyprian to guide your Church in time of woe.
Even in hiding, he made sure people your name would know.
Guiding your flock,
faithful with his written word,
working to make Holy Church grow.

Like these two men, Lord, faithful to You may we always be.
Knowing that by You and Your Truth, we will all be set free.
With joy may we
to the world Your Name proclaim
signed with the Cross, for all to see.

Suggested tune: Praise to the Lord

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