

to have built a baptistery near the former and to have exercised episcopal functions there. The story, however, can lay no claim to historical credibility. These two churches came into existence in the fourth century, although it is not impossible that they replaced Christian houses, in which the faithful of Rome assembled for Divine service before the time of Constantine; the legend, however, should not be alleged as proof of this fact.

In many later writings (e.g. the Liber Pontificalis) the Pastor or Shepherd in the work of Hermas is erroneously accepted as the name of the author, and, since a Roman priest Pastor is assigned an important role in the foundation of these churches, it is quite possible that the writer of the legend was similarly misled, and consequently interwove Pope Pius into his legendary narrative. Two letters written to Bishop Justus of Vienne ascribed to Pius, are not authentic. The feast of Saint Pius I is celebrated on July 11.

Saint Pius I is the first real bishop of Rome. Prior to this the Christian community was governed by a council of elders or deacons. Pius was the first "bishop" who exercised sole authority. To him is attributed the choice of the date for the celebration of Easter, i.e., on the first Sunday after the March full moon.

*(excerpted from: www.catholic-forum.com; www.jdemirdjian.com)

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Pope Saint Pius I

Feast Day: July 11



Pope Saint Pius I,

**was credited with the decree that all heretics
willing to repent should be received and baptized.**

excerpted from: *The Popes: A Papal History*, J.V. Bartlett

Pope Saint Pius I

*The date of birth of Pope Saint Pius I is unknown. He reigned as pope from about 140-154 AD. According to the earliest list of the popes, given by Irenaeus, Pius was the ninth successor of Saint Peter. The dates given in the Liberian Catalogue for his pontificate (146 to 161) rest on a false calculation of earlier chroniclers, and cannot be accepted. The only chronological datum we possess is supplied by the year of Saint Polycarp of Smyrna's death, which may be referred with great certainty to 155 to 156. On his visit to Rome in the year before his death Polycarp found Anicetus, the successor of Pius, bishop there; consequently, the death of Pius must have occurred about 154. The Liber Pontificalis says the father of Pius was Rufinus, and makes him a native of Aquileia; that is, however, probably a conjecture of the author, who had heard of Rufinus of Aquileia (end of fourth century). From a notice in the Liberian Catalogue, which is confirmed by the Muratorian Fragment, we learn that a brother of this pope, Hermas by name, published The Shepherd. If the information which the author gives concerning his personal conditions and station (first a slave, then a freedman) were historical, we should know more about the origin of the pope, his brother. It is very possible that the story which Hermas relates of himself is a fiction.

During the pontificate of Pius the Roman Church was visited by various heretics, who sought to propagate their false doctrine among the faithful of the capital. The Gnostic Valentinus, who had made his appearance under Pope Hyginus (136-140), continued to sow his heresy, apparently not without success. The Gnostic Cerdon was also active in Rome at this period, during which Marcion arrived in the capital. Excluded from communion by Pius, the latter founded his heretical body. But Catholic teachers also visited the Roman Church, the most important being Saint Justin, who expounded the Christian teachings during the pontificate of Pius and that of his successor.

A great activity thus marks the Christian community in Rome, which stands clearly conspicuous as the center of the Church. The Liber Pontificalis speaks of a decision of this pope to the effect that Jewish converts to Christianity should be admitted and baptized. What this means we do not know; doubtless the author of the Liber Pontificalis, here as frequently, refers to the pope a decree valid in the Church of his own time.

A later legend refers the foundation of the two churches, the *titulus Pudentis* (*ecclesia Pudentiana*) and the *titulus Praxedis*, to the time of this pope, who is also supposed