

Church of Rome and as a tool in the hands of the ambitious and intriguing deacon Callistus, whose early life is maliciously depicted (*Philosophumena*, IX, xi-xii). Consequently when Callistus was elected pope (217-218) on the death of Zephyrinus, Hippolytus immediately left the communion of the Roman Church and had himself elected antipope by his small band of followers. These he calls the Catholic Church and himself successor to the Apostles, terming the great majority of Roman Christians the School of Callistus. He accuses Callistus of having fallen first into the heresy of Theodotus, then into that of Sabellius; also of having through avarice degraded ecclesiastical, and especially the penitential, discipline to a disgraceful laxity. These reproaches were altogether unjustified. Hippolytus himself advocated an excessive rigorism. He continued in opposition as antipope throughout the reigns of the two immediate successors of Callistus, Urban (222 or 223 to 230) and Pontius (230-35), and during this period, probably during the pontificate of Pontianus, he wrote the "*Philosophumena*". He was banished to the unhealthy island (*insula nociva*) of Sardinia at the same time as Pontianus; and shortly before this, or soon afterward, he became reconciled with the legitimate bishop and the Church of Rome. For, after both exiles had died on the island of Sardinia, their mortal remains were brought back to Rome on the same day, August 13 (either 236 or one of the following years), and solemnly interred, Pontianus in the papal vault in the catacomb of Callistus and Hippolytus in a spot on the Via Tiburtina. Both were equally revered as martyrs by the Roman Church: certain proof that Hippolytus had made his peace with that Church before his death. With his death the schism must have come to a speedy end, which accounts for its identification with the Novatian schism at the end of the fourth century, as we learn from the inscription by Damasus.

\*(excerpted from: [www.wf-f.org](http://www.wf-f.org))

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## Saints Pontian and Hippolytus

Feast Day: August 13



Martyrs

## St. Pontian, pope and martyr

\*Dates of birth and death unknown.

With Pontian begins the brief chronicle of the Roman bishops of the third century, of which the author of the Liberian Catalogue of the popes made use in the fourth century and which gives more exact data for the lives of the popes.

According to this account Pontian was made pope July 21, 230, and reigned until 235.

In 235 in the reign of Maximinus the Thracian began a persecution directed chiefly against the heads of the Church. One of its first victims was Pontian, who with Hippolytus was banished to the unhealthy island of Sardinia. To make the election of a new pope possible, Pontian resigned September 28, 235.

Hippolytus, who had been banished with Pontian, became reconciled to the Roman Church, and with this the schism he had caused came to an end. How much longer Pontian endured the sufferings of exile and harsh treatment in the Sardinian mines is unknown. According to old and no longer existing Acts of martyrs, used by the author of the "Liber Pontificalis", he died in consequence of the privations and inhuman treatment he had to bear.

Pope Fabian (236-50) had the remains of Pontian and Hippolytus brought to Rome at a later date and Pontian was buried on August 13 in the papal crypt of the Catacomb of Callistus. In 1909 the original epitaph was found in the crypt of St. Cecilia, near the papal crypt. The epitaph, agreeing with the other known epitaphs of the papal crypt, reads: PONTIANOS, EPISK. MARTUR (Pontianus, Bishop, Martyr). The word *mártur* was added later and is written in ligature [cf. Wilpert, "Die Papstgräber und die Cäciliengruft in der Katakomben des hl. Kalixtus" (Freiburg, 1909), 1 sq., 17 sq., Plate III]. He is placed under August 13 in the list of the "Depositiones martyrum" in the chronographia of 354.

## St. Hippolytus, priest and martyr

Martyr, presbyter and antipope; date of birth unknown; died about 236. Until the publication in 1851 of the recently discovered "Philosophumena", it was impossible to obtain any definite authentic facts concerning Hippolytus of Rome.

The discovery of the "Philosophumena" has now made it possible to clear up the most important period of the life of St. Hippolytus through his own evidence, and at the same time to test and correct the conflicting accounts contained in the old authorities. We proceed on the assumption that Hippolytus was really the author of the aforesaid work, an hypothesis almost universally accepted by investigators today.

Hippolytus was a presbyter of the Church of Rome at the beginning of the third century. There is no difficulty in admitting that he could have been a disciple of St Irenaeus either in Rome or Lyons. It is equally possible that Origen heard a homily by Hippolytus when he went to Rome about the year 212. In the reign of Pope Zephyrinus (198-217) he came into conflict with that pontiff and with the majority of the Church of Rome, primarily on account of the christological opinions which for some time had been causing controversies in Rome. Hippolytus had combated the heresy of Theodotion and the Alogi; in like fashion he opposed the false doctrines of Noetus, of Epigonus, of Cleomenes, and of Sabellius, who emphasized the unity of God too one-sidedly (Monarchians) and saw in the concepts of the Father and the Son merely manifestations (*modi*) of the Divine Nature (Modalism, Sabellianism). Hippolytus, on the contrary, stood uncompromisingly for a real difference between the Son (*Logos*) and the Father, but so as to represent the Former as a Divine Person almost completely separate from God (Ditheism) and at the same time altogether subordinate to the Father (Subordinationism). As the heresy in the doctrine of the Modalists was not at first clearly apparent, Pope Zephyrinus declined to give a decision. For this Hippolytus gravely censured him, representing him as an incompetent man, unworthy to rule the