

## REFLECTION

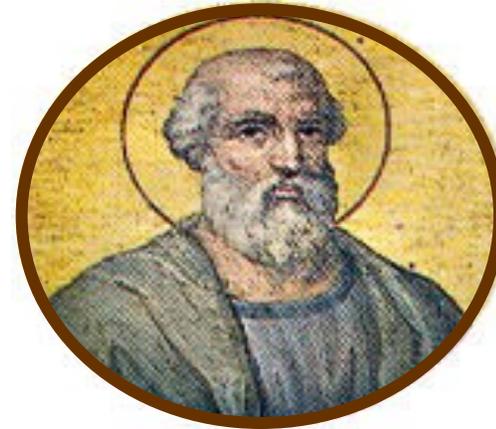
It is a fundamental maxim of the Christian morality, and a truth which Christ has established in the clearest terms, and in innumerable passages of the gospel, that the cross, or sufferings and mortifications, are the road to eternal bliss. They, therefore, who lead not here a crucified and mortified life, are unworthy ever to possess the unspeakable joys of His kingdom. Our Lord Himself, our model and our head, walked in this path, and His great apostle puts us in mind that he entered into bliss only by His blood and by the cross.

Nevertheless, this is a truth which the world can never understand, how clearly so ever it be preached by Christ, and recommended by His powerful example, and that of his martyrs and of all the saints. Christians still pretend, by the joys and pleasures of this world, to attain to the bliss of heaven, and shudder at the very mention of mortification, penance, or sufferings. So prevalent is this fatal error, which self-love fortify in the minds of many, that those who have given themselves to God with the greatest fervor, are bound always to stand upon their guard against it. Daily they should renew their fervor in the love and practice of penance, and to arm themselves with patience against sufferings, lest they lose courage for the afflictions which God is pleased to purify them with and also to afford them the means of sanctifying themselves. \*(excerpted from: [www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com); [www.catholicculture.org](http://www.catholicculture.org); [www.patheos.com](http://www.patheos.com))

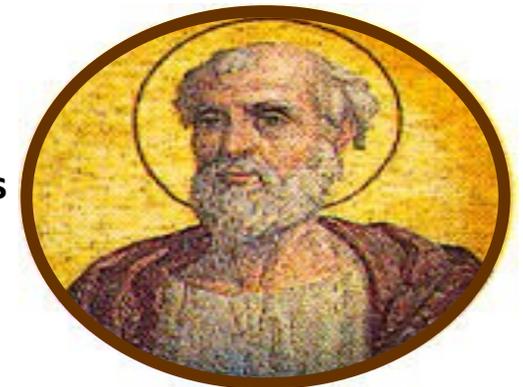
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## ***Saints Cletus and Marcellinus***

**Feast Day: April 26**



**Saint Cletus**



**Saint Marcellinus**

## Saints Cletus and Marcellinus

\*Two Popes of the early Church sit on opposite corners of the portico ceiling of Saint Peter's basilica in Rome. The two men served as Popes two centuries apart. What they share is that their pontificates occurred during times of great torture and persecution for professing Christians under Roman rule. Reflecting on the lives of Popes Cletus and Marcellinus puts into perspective the trials the faithful now are facing.

### Saint Cletus

To be a pope in the first three centuries after Christ was to face the prospect of death by Roman authorities. Pope Cletus was the third pope and reigned from 76 to 88. Cletus, like Saint Peter before him, was martyred. He succeeded Saint Linus, which circumstance alone shows his eminent virtue among the first disciples of Saint Peter in the West. The canon of the Roman mass, Bede, and other Martyrologists, style him a martyr. He was buried near Saint Linus, on the Vatican, and his relics still remain in that church.

Emperor Vespasian reigned in Rome when Cletus assumed leadership of the Church. His specific responsibilities, like those of his predecessor Linus, can only be surmised because a monarchical episcopate had not yet emerged in Rome. Little is known of Cletus, perhaps due to the confusion over his name. Some historians refer to him as Anencletus, which is Greek adjective meaning "blameless." There is no doubt that he is recognized as the third successor and is commemorated in the ancient canon of the Mass.

## Saint Marcellinus

Saint Marcellinus succeeded Saint Caius in the bishopric of Rome. He was Pope from 296 to 304. Marcellinus himself was not martyred; instead he died a natural death in an era when scores of Christians, including Saint George, were murdered for their faith.

At the time Saint Marcellinus succeeded Saint Caius in 296, Diocletian set himself up for a deity, and impiously claimed divine honors. Theodoret says that in those stormy times of persecution, Marcellinus acquired great glory. With wise forethought he ordered large rooms to be constructed in the catacombs for liturgical use. Such a chamber in the catacomb of Callistus still recalls his action. During this persecution, Roman authorities confiscated the Callistus Catacomb, which for one hundred years had been the official cemetery of the Church of Rome. Martyrs and Popes had been buried there. Christians blocked the main entrances to the catacomb to protect the tombs. His grave in the catacomb of Priscilla was an object of highest honor.

Marcellinus sat in Saint Peter's chair for eight years, three months, and twenty-five days, dying in 304, a year after the cruel persecution broke out. He is styled a martyr, though his blood was not shed in the cause of religion, as appears from the Liberian calendar, which places him among those popes that were not put to death for the faith.