

Cyprian was happy to accept the challenge and confronted Justina with what probably amounted to an attempted hypnosis, and when that failed, he summoned the forces of evil to go to work for him. Justina made the sign of the cross and a now dumbfounded Cyprian found himself doing likewise. Completely disarmed by this meaningful gesture, Cyprian became an instant Christian convert, and forgetting the suitor and his rueful purpose in approaching Justina he went home to burn his books and to kneel in prayer for forgiveness, vowing to serve Jesus Christ for the rest of his life.

Turning his full talents to a preparation for church service, Cyprian was ordained by Bishop Athimos, his spiritual mentor, after which he applied himself with such great vigor that he rose in a short time to the post of bishop of Carthage. The man who once scorned the house of God is now best remembered for his classic remark that, "He cannot have God for his Father who has not the Church for his mother."

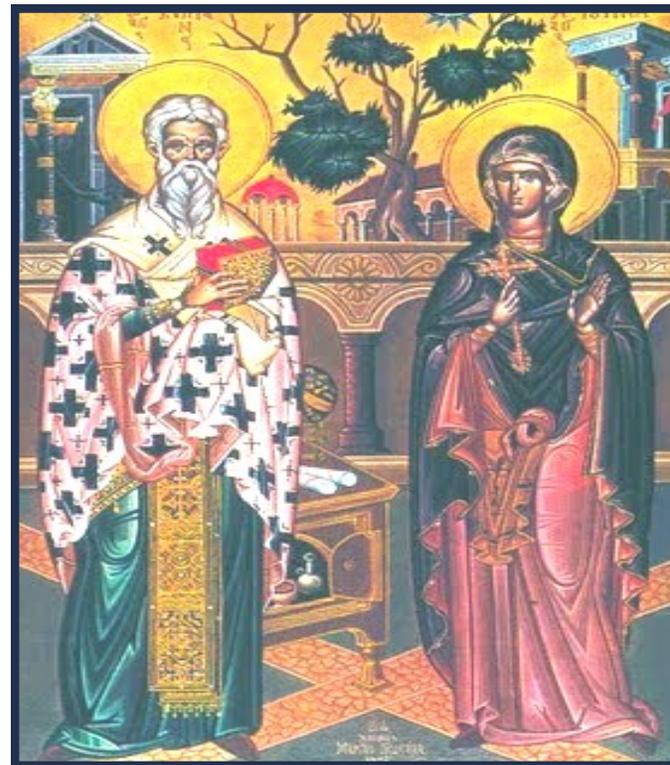
Meanwhile, Justina became a nun, and where she once was known as the female counterpart of a feared sorcerer, she came to be known as the female counterpart of a benign churchman. Both grew in stature in the church and both were of such influence in their respective spheres as to put fear into the pagan state. Arrested and convicted, they gave their lives for Christ and are commemorated jointly.

*(excerpted from: <http://www.sprint.net/au~corners>)

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Saints Cyprian and Justina

Feast Day: September 26



PRAYER

**Thou was converted from the art of sorcery,
O divinely wise one, to the knowledge of God,
and wast manifested to the world as a most wise physician,
granting healing to those who honor thee,
O Cyprian together with Justina.
With her, then, entreat the Master,
the Lover of mankind,
that He may save our souls.**

Saints Cyprian and Justina

*The lives of two saints named Cyprian and Justina are perhaps the most compelling and stimulating illustrations of the real meaning of the triumph of good over evil that can be found in the numberless accounts that course the pages of history in testimony of the omnipotence of God. Many are the saints who have been drawn from the shadow of sin into the bright light of the Savior, but this duo offers the often told transformation in such a dramatic fashion as to inspire not only the passive reader but the creative writer as well. Pedro Calderon's drama, "El Magico Prodigiso," is based on the story of Cyprian and Justina, followed two centuries later by Shelley's "Scenes from Calderon."

The linking of the names of Cyprian and Justina suggests that they worked hand in hand as a missionary team in the service of the Savior, but although fate brought them together for a less than honorable purpose, each acquired sainthood apart from one another. Cyprian, like Justina, hailed from the ancient city of Antioch, Syria, where each had acquired a reputation for mastery of the black art of sorcery, among other things. Cyprian was noted for his deep intellect and wisdom, and although his female counterpart, Justina, was an acknowledged intellectual as well, she was considered less of a menace to the Christian community, although they both instilled fear in the hearts of Christians with the powers stemming from Satan.

A profound thinker and philosopher, Cyprian oddly enough lowered himself to the cerebral level of the pagans whose ritualistic orgies summoned the worst and contradicted Christianity every step of their evil way. He found himself in the van with pagan rabble and did nothing to discourage their adulation of him as the possessor of powers endowed by a force which made him a veritable magician.

Justina, on the other hand, began to have gnawing doubts about paganism, and told her pagan parents, Edesios and Kledonias, she would seek out that which would fill the void in their lives. After listening to a sermon by a youthful priest named Prailios, she embraced Christianity and became an activist for Christ with such fervor that her parents followed suit with enough conviction to cause her father to study for the priesthood. Edesios was ordained by bishop Optaton and was joined by a great number of converts.

Justina made her presence felt in the missionary work, but she evoked from a man named Agalides not the love of the Savior, but rather stirred within him such a love for her that he pursued her in an earnest appeal for her hand. Spurned at every turn, the rejected suitor finally sought the assistance of the famed Cyprian in the hope that a magic spell would be cast over the girl, and she would be won over.