

Saints Hippolytus and Cassian

Feast Day: August 13

Saint Hippolytus turned his eyes to Heaven during his martyrdom. Many holy martyrs, in their sufferings, and many saints, in their sickness and adversity, did the same. They desired to show by it, that they bore their pains for the love of God. They also recalled to mind the recompense which they hoped to receive for their sufferings, and were encouraged by this remembrance. Do we do the same in all our sorrows, cares and afflictions, and show, by it, that we will bear all for the love of God? No labor, no pain, no care will be too hard for us to bear, nor last longer than we can endure, if we raise our eyes to Heaven, especially if we consider that our labor, our cares, and our pains are very short in comparison to the eternal rest.

Saint Cassius especially endeavored to impress three moral points upon the minds of his pupils: esteem for the true faith, horror for sin, and love of virtue and piety. Whoever esteems the true faith has a priceless grace from the Almighty because He has granted you that faith without which there is no salvation. Fear and abhor sin more than any other evil: for, it can do you more harm than any other. Sin alone can make you eternally unhappy. Love virtue and piety: for "godliness is," according to the Apostle, "profitable to all things (1 Timothy iv)."

Without virtue we cannot go to Heaven. "Vainly does he desire to obtain the heavenly glories, who is not adorned with virtue. Virtue is the road to glory. Through virtue we attain eternal honor and joy" writes Saint Bernard.

*(excerpted from: //catholicarboroffaithandmorals.com)



THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. HIPPOLYTUS



THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. CASSIAN

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*Saint Hippolytus, an officer of the body-guard of the emperor Decius, had been born in the darkness of idolatry, but he had become a Christian, with all his household, in consequence of witnessing the many miracles which Saint Lawrence performed while in the prison under his charge. He had also been present when the saint, lying on the red-hot iron gridiron, endured the most terrible tortures. At the sight of the heroism of Saint Lawrence, he was filled with the desire to denounce himself a Christian, but he was prevented by Saint Lawrence. But when this martyr had gloriously ended his combat, Hippolytus, with the assistance of a priest, named Justinus, buried the sacred remains with great devotion and veneration. The emperor on being informed of it, had Hippolytus seized and brought before him. He asked him if it was true that he had become a Christian? Hippolytus answered firmly: "Yes, I am a Christian, and moreover resolved to die such." The emperor, who had always highly esteemed him, endeavored, first by promises and then by menaces, to induce him to forsake Christ. As, however, all was unavailing, he caused him to be tortured.

He was accordingly stretched on the ground, whipped with scourges, and beaten with clubs so fearfully, that it was believed he could not survive. But God, by a visible miracle, prolonged his life. Keeping his eyes fixed upon Heaven, he frequently repeated: "I am a Christian, I suffer for Christ's sake." After having been tormented for a long time, he was cast into prison, and the prefect received the order to behead him. Before executing this order, however, he went to the house of Hippolytus to secure his property. Finding the entire household had become Christians, he took them beyond the gates of the city and had them beheaded. Concordia, an old and holy matron, who had been Hippolytus' nurse, was scourged until she expired, because she encouraged the others to remain firm in their faith. At last, Hippolytus was taken out of prison and fastened to the tails of two horses, and dragged by them until he was torn to pieces, and his heroic soul was in the presence of Him whom he had so fearlessly confessed.

On the same day, though at another place, Saint Cassian suffered a martyrdom of unprecedented cruelty. This saint, was bishop of Brescia, but had been banished from his See on account of his faith. He intended to go to Rome and offer his services for the salvation of souls in some other place. On the way, he changed his mind, and taking up his residence at Imola, a town in Italy, he resolved to teach children to read and write, hoping that occasion would not be wanting to do good. In this apparently humble position, he was no less zealous than he had been in the administration of his diocese. He taught the children with love and gentleness, and endeavored to inspire them with respect for the Christian faith, fear and horror of sin, and love of virtue and piety. He continued in this occupation with great zeal for some years, to the great benefit of young and old, when suddenly a terrible persecution of the Christians arose.

He was one of the first who were taken prisoners. The tyrant commanded him to sacrifice to the gods. The holy bishop and teacher refused, as might have been expected, and tried to convince the judge of his fearful blindness in worshipping dumb idols or making gods of godless men. The tyrant, furious at his arguments, ordered the executioners to strip him of his clothes and tie his hands behind his back, and leave him exposed to the mercy of the children whom he had taken such great pains to teach. The children, who were taught that Cassian was a magician and consequently must die a most painful death, took their sharp iron pencils with which, in those days, they wrote upon their wax tablets, and pierced him with them till the blood ran profusely from his veins. This torture lasted a long time and was extremely painful. The saint, however, never complained of the ingratitude of his pupils, nor gave a sign of impatience, but praised and thanked the Lord until his soul went to Heaven to receive the crown of martyrdom.