

September 16, 2025

Daily Reflections



SAINTS CORNELIUS, POPE, AND CYPRIAN, BISHOP, MARTYRS

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Reflection

Cornelius and Cyprian were both bishops in the 2nd century but in different locations, with Cornelius serving in Rome as Pope and Cyprian as bishop in the north African city of Carthage. They both dealt with the issue of how to treat Christians who had abandoned their faith during Roman persecutions. Cornelius said they should be welcomed back after doing penance, and Cyprian agreed with him. They supported the same course of welcoming mercy.

When the persecution of Christians by the Roman government began again, Pope Cornelius was driven out of Rome and consequently died from the hardships he suffered during his exile. It was during this persecution that Cyprian went into hiding. He wrote letters to stay connected with the church in Carthage. Eventually he returned to Carthage, continuing his ministry as bishop. It was another Roman persecution under Emperor Valerian that took

the life of Cyprian; he was beheaded for refusing to sacrifice to the pagan gods.

Consider the psalm from the Scripture Readings of the Mass of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian:

*In the LORD I take refuge; how can you say to me,
“Flee to the mountain like a bird!
For, see, the wicked bend the bow;
they place the arrow on the string
to shoot in the dark at the upright of heart.
When the pillars are overthrown,
what can the just man do?”*

*The LORD is in his holy temple;
the LORD’s throne is in heaven,
his eyes behold,
his searching glance is on humankind.
The LORD searches the just and the wicked;
the lover of violence he hates.
For the LORD is just, he loves just deeds;
the upright shall see the LORD’s face.*

PSALM 11

This is a song of trust. Rather than asking to be rescued from a specific danger, the author chooses to rest in the presence of the LORD. Instead of following the advice of friends to run away to the mountains, the traditional refuge for people in danger, the psalmist chooses not to leave town but to search for the LORD in the temple. She entrusts her life to the all-powerful and all-knowing God. The psalmist’s expressed desire for the punishment of the wicked is another way of expressing the wish that God’s justice be completed in its totality.



For Pondering

- As you consider Cornelius and Cyprian and Psalm 11, what do you say to your Creator God?
 - What do you hear your Creator God saying to you?
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