

martyred along with seven deacons, including Saint Lawrence. He was martyred on August 6, although the Church celebrates the Transfiguration of the Lord on August 6, so his feast day was moved to August 7th.

Next the Roman Canon mentions Sts. Cornelius and Cyprian. St. Cyprian was born into a rich family in Carthage in the early third century. He was originally known as Thascius. He was an orator in Carthage and was baptized later in life. He was elected bishop of Carthage around the year 248. During his reign, the Decian persecution began and he was targeted especially. He went into exile and tried to lead the church at Carthage from a distance. During the persecutions, many of the Christians did offer sacrifice to pagan idols rather than suffer torture and death. So, Cyprian had to decide how best to handle those whose faith had lapsed.

St. Cyprian took a middle ground in the controversy. St. Cyprian believed that those who had lapsed could come back to the Church, after a public penance. There were those in Carthage who wanted to readmit those who had lapsed with little or no public penance. There were also those in Rome who did not want to readmit those who had lapsed at all, and they had influence in Carthage as well. St. Cyprian stood his ground and eventually his middle course is what happened.

St. Cyprian also had a concern for the sick, and he wrote many works. One work was on the lapsed, one was on the unity of the Catholic Church and another treatise on the Lord's Prayer. He wrote that prayer is the only true refuge of Christians. After the controversy with those who had lapsed in their faith, another persecution broke out, this time under the Emperor Valerian (the same persecution which led to the death of Pope Sixtus II). He was eventually executed in 258. His feast day is with St. Cornelius on September 16th.

St. Cornelius was elected bishop of Rome in 251 and he was also involved in the controversy surrounding those who lapsed in their faith. In Rome, the Emperor Decius wanted to prevent the election of a new pope after the death of Pope Saint Fabian in 250. However, the Emperor was called away to fight the Goths, and the election took place. However, controversy broke out because Novatian, who led the group that did not want to readmit the lapsed at all, was furious that he was not elected. Eventually, Pope Cornelius was acknowledged as the true pope and peace returned. After the death of Emperor Decius, a new Emperor came with a new set of persecutions. Pope Cornelius was first exiled, and from his exile he wrote many letters. He was eventually beheaded in 253. Again, he shares a feast day with St. Cyprian on September 16th.

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Roman Canon Saints 1

During this month of November, I'll focus on the saints named in the Roman Canon, which today we know as Eucharistic Prayer I. After the Mother of God, Saint Joseph and the Apostles, the first saints mentioned are Linus, Cletus and Clement. These were the first successors of St. Peter as the bishop of Rome and the first popes. St. Linus is attested by several early Church Fathers as being the second pope after St. Peter. He may have been consecrated bishop by St. Paul. He succeeded St. Peter as bishop of Rome around the year 67. He is the same Linus mentioned in 2 Timothy 4:21. In that passage, St. Paul lists Linus as someone with him in Rome towards the end of his life. Not much is known about St. Linus for sure beyond that. He was of Italian descent from the Tuscany region. His feast day is September 23rd.

Next is St. Cletus, also known as Anacletus, who was the third pope. Cletus means "one who has been called" and Anacletus means "one who has been called back." Different names appear in different sources, but the two names refer to the same person. He succeeded St. Linus as pope around the year 79. Very little is known about St. Cletus, other than his division of Rome into about 15 parishes and the ordination of several priests. His feast day is April 26th.

After that is St. Clement, who was the fourth pope. He succeeded St. Cletus as pope around the year 90. St. Clement wrote a letter to the Corinthians and is known as the first apostolic father of the Church, meaning that he was one of the Fathers of the Church who had personal contact with the apostles. St. Clement is mentioned in Philippians 4:3 as one of St. Paul's co-workers. St. Clement also knew St. Peter.

His letter to the Corinthians reaffirms the Church's hierarchy. He writes to a congregation at Corinth that is troubled at the deposition of a bishop and priests. He reminds the Corinthians that the apostles themselves established the hierarchy in the Church, and that the bishop and priests are to be reinstated. His letter to the Corinthians is often considered the earliest Christian writing outside of the New Testament. This letter is an important testimony to the structure of the Church very early in its history. His feast day is November 23rd.

Next the Roman Canon mentions Saint Sixtus. Saint Sixtus was the second pope of that name. Saint Sixtus II was pope from 257 to 258, not for very long. He was probably born in Greece, but came to Rome later. He restored relations between the Roman church and the African and Eastern churches. He was martyred under the reign of Emperor Valerian. He was