

# ***Church History***



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- *Introduction to Church History*
- *The Ancient Church* AD 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries
- *The Age of Crusades* AD 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries
- *The Renaissance* AD 14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries
- *Conquest and Reformation* AD 16<sup>th</sup> century
- *The Age of Enlightenment* AD 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries
- *The Age of Revolution* AD 19<sup>th</sup> century
- *The Modern Age* AD 20<sup>th</sup> century
- *The Postmodern Age* AD 21<sup>st</sup> century



# *The Ancient Church*

- The Third Century was a time of massive crisis in the world
  - 199-217 Pope Zephyrinus succeeded Pope Victor
    - His papacy was undermined by bishop Theodotus of Byzantium, who had taught that there were only two possible perspectives on the relationship between the Father and the Son—
      - 1) *Modalism*—as Sabellius taught, God revealed Himself to humanity in three stages or “modes” (the Father in Creation, the Son in Redemption, and the Spirit in Sanctification and Regeneration)



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      - 1) *Modalism*
      - 2) *Adoptionism*—as *Theodotus* taught, God granted “divinity” upon a human (but perfect) Jesus at His baptism (or at His ascension), allowing Him to carry out His prophetic ministry using God’s divine power





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      - 1) *Modalism*
      - 2) *Adoptionism*
    - Interestingly, Zephyrinus actually *did* subscribe to modalism
    - This drew strong attacks from a young Roman presbyter named Hippolytus
      - Following the writings of Justin Martyr, Hippolytus believed that Jesus was the Platonic *Logos*—the “*Word*,” the “*Truth*,” the “*Thought*” of God, expressed in the Old Testament—emanating *from* God and made flesh (i.e.; a separate Divine Person)



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  - 217-222 Pope Callixtus succeeded Zephyrinus
    - He began to overturn several traditional papal decisions—he even began forgiving such sins as adultery and heresy... largely because the Church was in need of those people's financial support
    - If you'll remember, this was too much for Tertullian, who denounced the pope for forgiving what *he* saw as unforgivable sins





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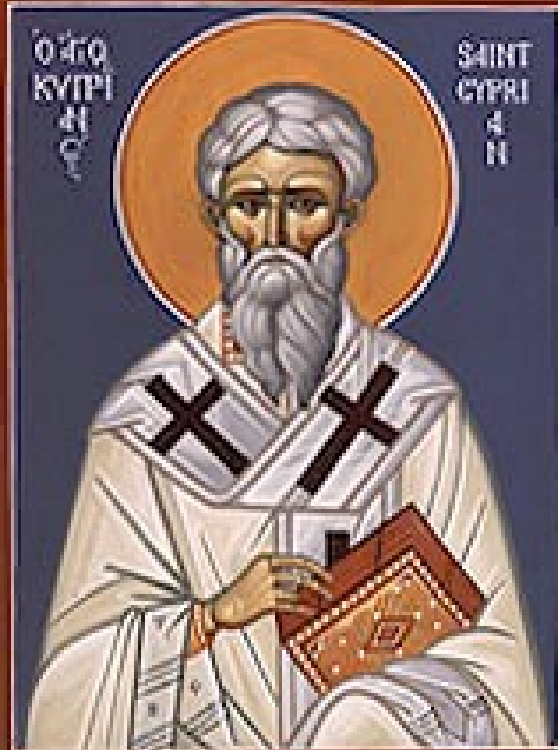
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- He began to overturn several traditional papal decisions—he even began forgiving such sins as adultery and heresy... largely because the Church was in need of those people's financial support
- This was also too much for Hippolytus, who allowed himself to be duly elected by other presbyters as a rival, *anti-pope*
  - He continued to serve as anti-pope against the next two popes—Urban and Pontian, until both he and Pontian were exiled together by Emperor Thrax in 235
    - Ironically, in their exile, the two rival popes settled their differences, and *both* are now considered saints by the Catholic Church today



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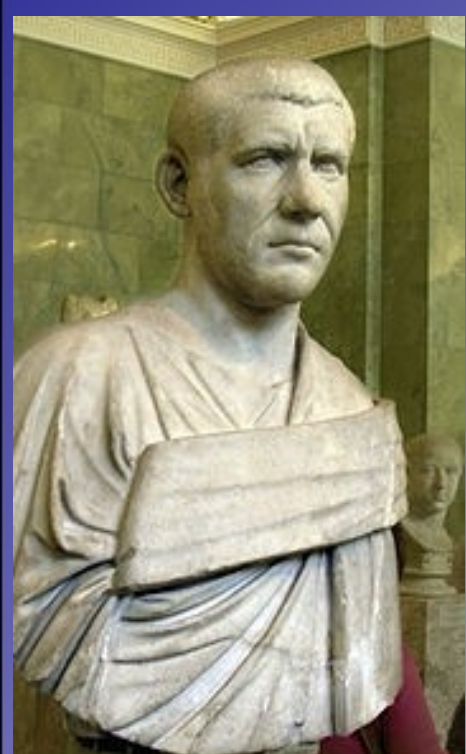
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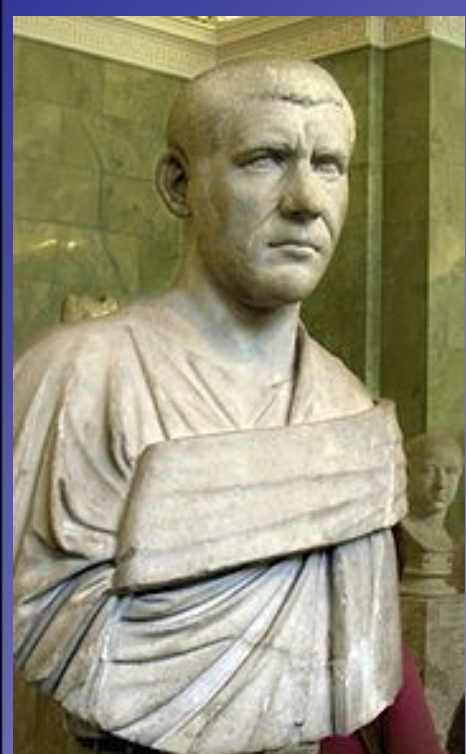
# ***The Ancient Church***

- Funky little teaching moment—
  - Philip—also known as “Philip the Arab,” since he was born in Syria—became emperor in 244 during that “Crisis in the Third Century” that we talked about, when 25 different emperors vied for the crown in a 50-year span
    - One of the first things he did as emperor was to negotiate a peace treaty with the Persian king, Shapur (who had just killed his predecessor), giving the Persians 500,000 gold denarii
    - This did not impress the Roman army, which had just spent two years in the Middle East, fighting against the Persians



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    - Philip was openly sympathetic toward Christians (coming from Christianized Syria), and Eusebius says that he converted to Christianity himself, along with his wife
      - He even tried to celebrate Easter in Antioch, but Bishop Babylas said that he had too many sins on his head, and forced him to sit with the penitents instead





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    - Philip was openly sympathetic toward Christians (coming from Christianized Syria), and Eusebius says that he converted to Christianity himself, along with his wife
    - Soon after Philip's conversion, his own armies forced Trajan Decius to overthrow him
      - In fact, it appears that Philip was “fragged” by his own troops





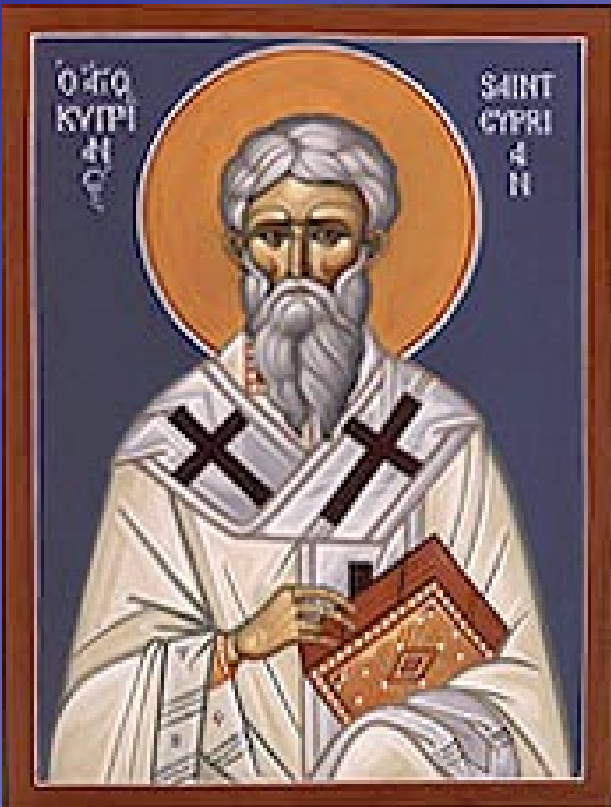
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  - **Decius immediately cracked down on anything that appeared to display any of Philip's perceived weaknesses—including Christianity**
    - In 250, he issued an edict that required everyone in the Empire to make sacrifices to the Roman gods by a certain date
      - Anyone who did was issued a “*libellus*,” certifying that they'd done it... and anyone who didn't have a *libellus* by that date was to be tortured and killed
        - Even Pope Fabian was among those who refused to make the sacrifices and was therefore executed...
          - leading to the elections of pope and *anti-pope*, Cornelius and Novatian



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  - 249 Cyprian became bishop of Carthage
    - This was really unfortunate timing, since he became the bishop the year before the Decian persecution started up
      - Bishops in particular were forced to make the public sacrifices—Roman proconsuls went to them *personally*
      - Several bishops caved in and made the sacrifices (some claiming that they did it only to protect their regional churches)



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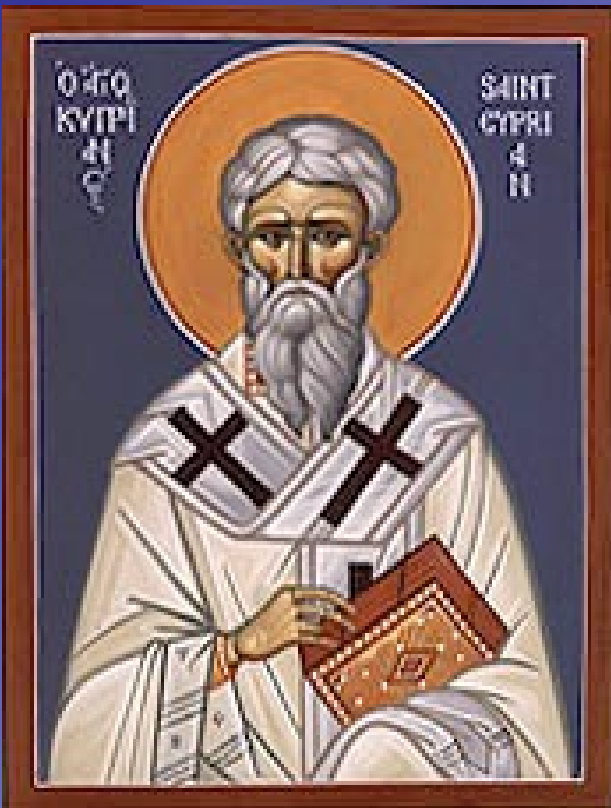
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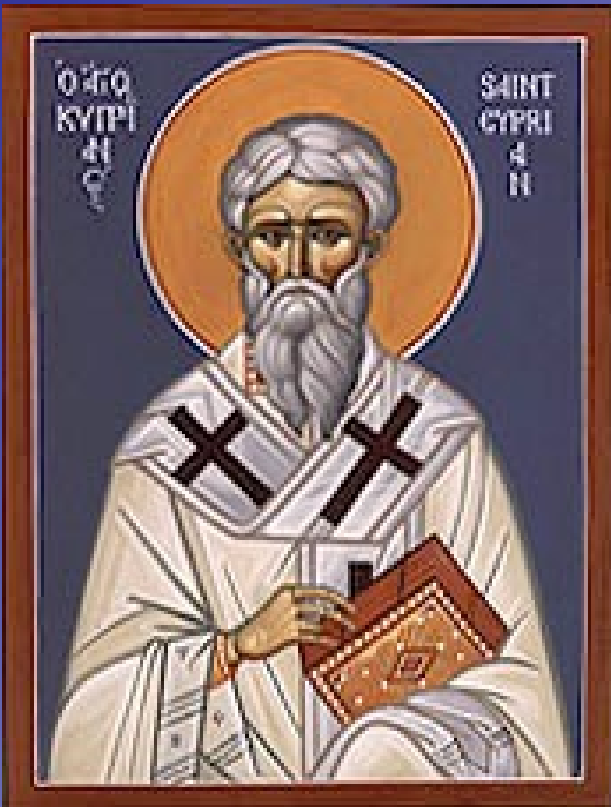
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  - Cyprian himself ran away and hid
    - And yet, he still maintained a harsh discipline against those who had “lapsed” in their faith and made the sacrifices
    - Thus, he made enemies on *both* sides of the theological fence—the conservatives because he'd run from the persecution, and the liberals because he wouldn't show grace to others who had caved in under persecution





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      - When he returned after the persecution was over, he did allow for the *lapsi* or *libellatici* to be received back into the Church... but only on their deathbeds



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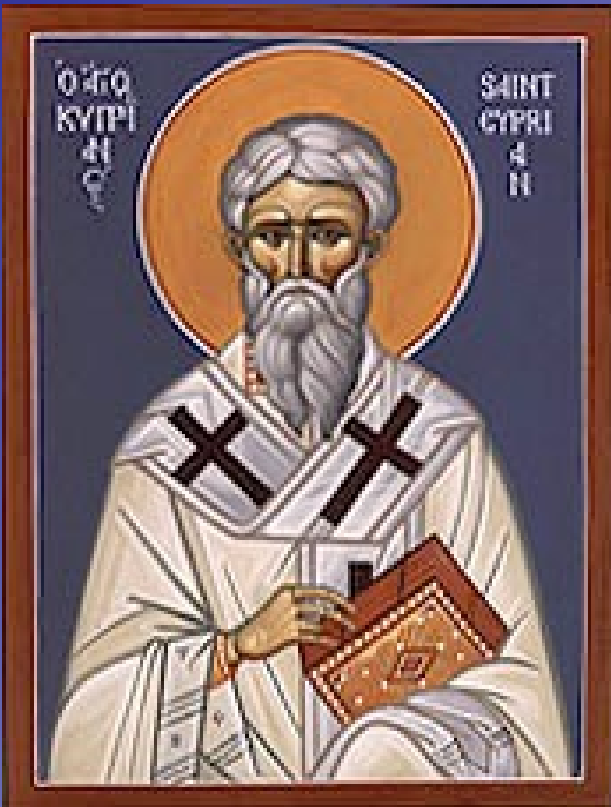
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- Cyprian made a name for himself within the Church by demonstrating his servant's heart during a second great plague that hit the Roman Empire in 252
  - The plague devastated the Roman world for the next 15 years—  
Alexandria lost 2/3 of its population and (at the peak of the plague) Rome was losing 5,000 people every day



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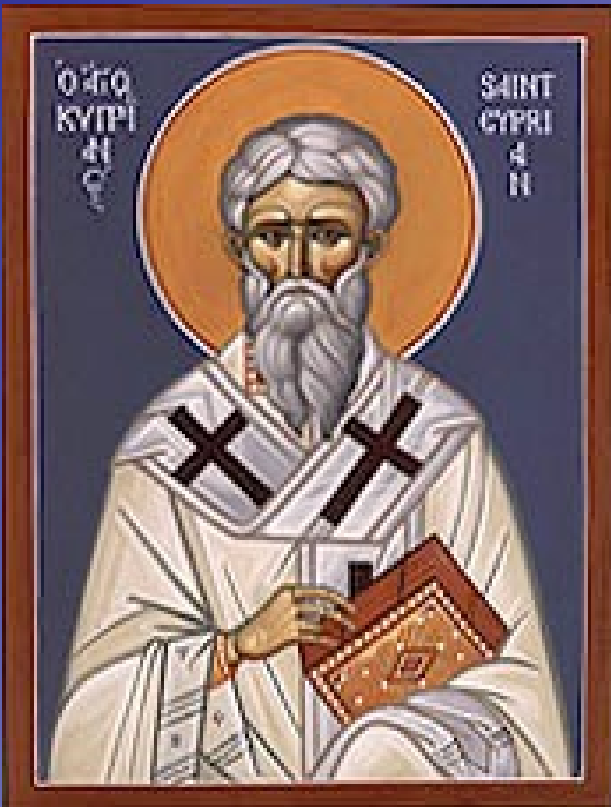
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- The plague actually cut short the Decian persecution, in large part because—as had been the case during the Antonine Plague decades earlier—the Christians became famous for seeking plague victims out so that they could minister to their needs
  - In fact, history calls this “Cyprian's Plague,” due to his efforts to help





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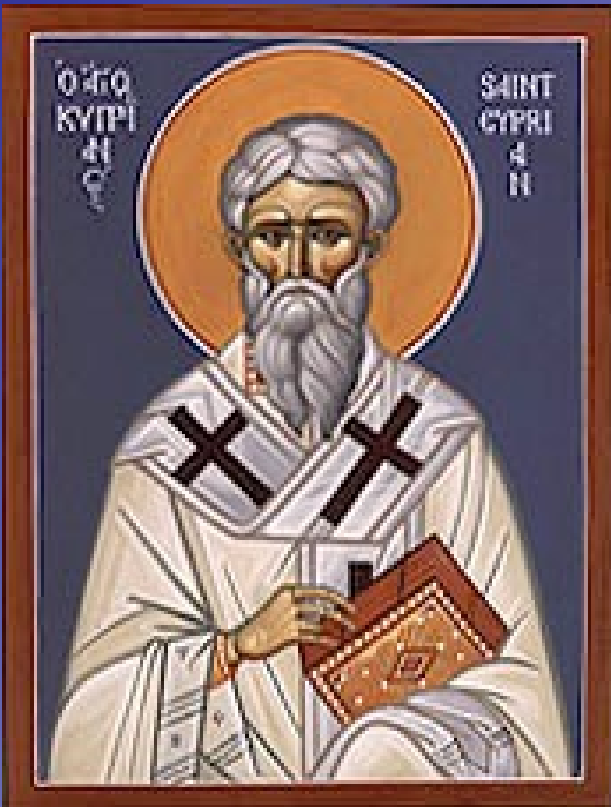
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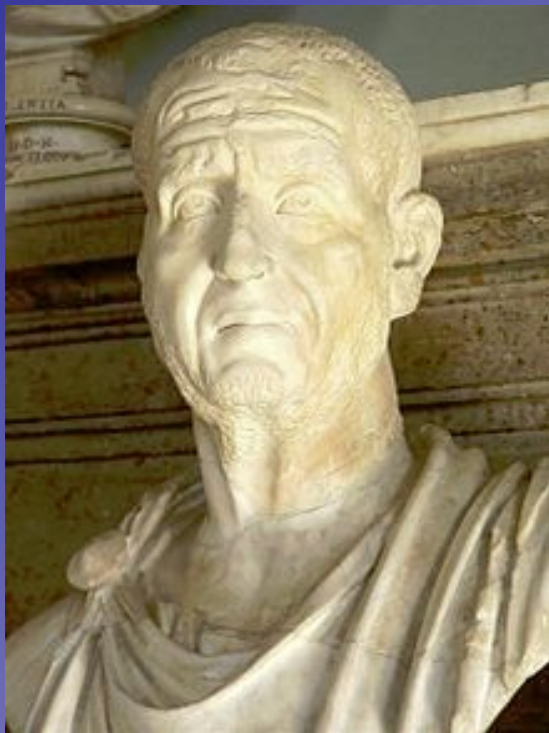
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- Grass-roots, public support *again* began to sway toward Christianity, since the Manicheans tended to see the plague as part of the ongoing battle between God and Satan, and thus *avoided* the sick



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  - 251 Decius lost the crucial Battle of Abritus, largely due to his own stupidity
    - Having solidly beaten the Goths on the field, he chose to “finish them off” by chasing them into their native Bulgarian swamplands, where the guerilla tactics he forced them into using then overwhelmed his Roman troops
      - Decius himself was killed in the slaughter



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- His first action was suing for peace with the Goths—promising them an annual tribute in return for not fighting against Rome
  - The Roman Empire is now *officially* paying into the Goths' protection racket
  - In the Middle East, the same Persian King Shapur with whom Philip had dealt now invaded Syria—destroying the legion stationed there—and even moved into Eastern Europe
    - It's telling that there was no official Roman response to this





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  - Within a year, Cyprian's plague hit, and the Roman Army was decimated, so *appeasement* actually became the most militarily and economically feasible course of action
  - Nonetheless, Gallus was murdered by his own disgruntled troops for being a bad commander in their eyes



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Valerian became emperor

- To show his strength of character compared to the weak Gallus, he did what emperors had done for years—he persecuted the Christians

- In 257, he issued an edict that called for the immediate execution of all Christian leadership

- This mass purge included Cyprian as well as Pope Stephen, who was bloodily beheaded while sitting on the papal throne—one of the first references to its usage

