

Church Fathers / Episode 10 / Cyprian of Carthage

<p>Att. Picture of the Church (1).</p>	<p><<CAM 1>> Hello and Welcome to this edition of Wisdom of the Fathers.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of the Ascension (2).</p>	<p>The Catholic faith is one of rich intellectual tradition ... stretching all the way back to the time of Christ.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of the Bible (3).</p>	<p>When Christ ascended into Heaven ... He left us a church that was in its infancy ... in its self-understanding.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of Church Fathers (4).</p>	<p>This infancy created a NEED within in the church for individuals to RISE UP and think about ... pray over ... and meditate upon what God was revealing.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of Catholics in the Pews (5).</p>	<p>The answer to this NEED was the Church Fathers ... certain individuals who were intellectual giants ... gifted with the ability to either break down an article of faith into its simplest form or develop it further.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of Cyprian (6).</p>	<p>They did this so we ordinary Catholics could understand the fullness of what Jesus was trying to purport to us in sacred scripture and apostolic tradition ... also known as the Deposit of Faith.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of wealth (7).</p>	<p>In this tenth episode of Wisdom of the Fathers we're going to talk about St. Cyprian of Carthage ... an early Church Father. <<CAM 2>> Now ... before we get enamored in the details of his life ... let's zoom out here and look at the importance of this man. St. Cyprian was a famous public speaker. He had considerable wealth ... and held ... no doubt ... a great position in the</p>

<p>Att. Picture of books (8).</p> <p>Att. Type on “Lord’s Prayer ... On the Unity of the Church ... On the Lapsed ... On the Mortality ... On the Advantage of Patience ... On the Dress of Virgins ... On the Vanity of Idols ... On Works and Alms ... On the Epistles”.</p> <p>Att. Type on “The Church = indispensable ark of salvation.”</p>	<p>metropolis of Africa. His appearance was dignified without austerity ... and joyful without exuberancy. He was gifted with expressiveness and this is evident in his works. He was not a scholar ... nor a philosopher ... nor a theologian ... but primarily a man of the world and an administrator ... of capacious energies ... and of forcible and striking character. He was involved in a famous dispute over whether apostates should be readmitted to the Church. Cyprian believed they should ... but under stringent conditions.</p> <p>St. Cyprian was a writer. He was second only in importance to Tertullian as a Latin Father of the Church. He wrote at least ten treatises. For example ... he wrote on the Lord’s Prayer ... on the unity of the Church ... on the lapsed ... on mortality ... on the advantage of patience ... on the dress of virgins ... on the vanity of idols ... on works and alms ... and on the Epistles. He is most often remembered for his first treatise on the church where he enunciated the principle of the Church as the indispensable ark of salvation.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of Cyprian (9).</p> <p>Att. Picture of baptism (10).</p>	<p>The Life of Cyprian of Carthage</p> <p><<CAM 1>></p> <p>St. Cyprian was born in 190 A.D. in North Africa. During his youth ... he received a classical education.</p> <p>In his early adulthood ... he became a leading member of a legal fraternity in Carthage. He was an orator ... or a “pleader in the courts.” He was also a teacher of rhetoric.</p> <p>Later in life ... he converted to Christianity and was subsequently baptized. The date of his conversion is</p>

<p>Att. Picture of poor people (11).</p>	<p>unknown ... but after his baptism about 245 to 248 he gave away a portion of his wealth to the poor of Carthage.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of ordination (12).</p>	<p>Shortly after his baptism ... Cyprian quickly rose within the ranks of the Church. He was ordained a deacon ... and soon afterward presbyter ... and some time between July 248 and April 249 he was chosen bishop of Carthage. <<CAM 2>></p>
<p>Att. Picture of Cyprian (6).</p>	<p>His first concern was the Church's welfare ... along with the concomitant ridding of vices in the clergy and flock. He quickly became known outside Carthage ... and soon after ... bishops from other areas sought his counsel. His life as a bishop wasn't without controversy. Early in 250 ... the Decian persecution began. The emperor ... Decius ... wanted sacrifices made to him. In response ... Cyprian fled. The clergy of his time took issue with his leave ... but Cyprian said he had received a command from God to flee. Prior to his departure ... he distributed the church treasury among all the clergy to help to the poor. From his place of refuge he ruled his flock with earnestness and zeal ... using a faithful deacon as his intermediary.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of Decius (13).</p>	<p>Cyprian then was called to convert those Christians who offered pagan sacrifices to the Roman Gods. He proposed that those members who rejected Christ could come back on one condition. The condition was that they must do penance. <<CAM 1>></p>
<p>Att. Picture of pagan bull (14).</p>	<p>During Cyprian's absence ... he delegated his authority to four priest examiners of persons preparing for ordination to the priesthood and deaconate. But there</p>

<p>Att. Type on “Felicissimus ... Novatus”.</p>	<p>were diabolical forces at work. The exact nature of the rascality is unknown. Cyprian then probed the situation. Two influential persons resisted his questioning ... Felicissimus ... and the Presbyter ... Novatus. Cyprian subsequently excommunicated them along with six accomplices.</p> <p>After the excommunication ... a new schism broke out with the Roman Presbyter ... Novatian. Novatus ... a former Felicissimus associate ... and Carthaginian Presbyter ... joined the movement. Novatian taught that if Christians repented of their sin ... the lapsed Christians during time of persecution could not be readmitted.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of Cyprian (9).</p>	<p>St. Cyprian’s response was to write a series of circular letters to the African bishops condemning these wrongs. He later ... composed an entire tome ... “On the Unity of the Church.” <<CAM 2>></p>
<p>Att. Picture of Emperor Valerian I (15).</p>	<p>When he was 66 years of age ... another persecution arose under Emperor Valerian the FIRST ... and both Pope St. Stephen the FIRST and his successor ... Pope St. Sixtus the SECOND ... suffered martyrdom.</p>
<p>Att. Type on ... “Aspasius Paternus”.</p>	<p>In Africa ... Cyprian prepared his people for the expected edict of persecution. He was brought before the Roman proconsul Aspasius Paternus on August 30, 257. The persecutors wanted Cyprian to pay homage and offer sacrifice to the pagan deities. He refused ... however ... and firmly professed Christ.</p>
<p>Att. Picture of pagan bull (14).</p> <p>Att. Picture of Korba (16).</p>	<p>The consul then banished him to Curubis ... modern Korba ... where he took care of his flock and his banished clergy.</p>

<p>Att. Picture of Cyprian (6).</p> <p>Att. Type on ... "Thanks be to God!"</p>	<p><<CAM 1>></p> <p>At the age of 68 ... St. Cyprian was imprisoned at the behest of the new proconsul ... Galerius Maximus. The day following he was examined for the last time and sentenced to die by the sword. His only answer was ... "Thanks be to God!" The execution was carried out at once in an open place near the city. A vast multitude followed Cyprian on his last journey. He removed his garments without assistance ... knelt down ... and prayed. After he blindfolded himself ... the executioners beheaded him by the sword.</p> <p>Now that we have an understanding of who St. Cyprian of Carthage was ... let's take a look at what he had to say about confession. <<CAM 2>></p>
<p>Att. Granite Background (for all quotes); change color of background for each quote.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Cyprian on Confession</p> <p>"The apostle [Paul] likewise bears witness and says: ' . . . Whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord' [1 Cor. 11:27]. But [the impenitent] spurn and despise all these warnings; before their sins are expiated, before they have made a confession of their crime, before their conscience has been purged in the ceremony and at the hand of the priest . . . they do violence to [the Lord's] body and blood, and with their hands and mouth they sin against the Lord more than when they denied him" (The Lapsed 15:1-3 (A.D. 251)).</p> <p>"Of how much greater faith and salutary fear are they who . . . confess their sins to the priests of God in a straightforward manner and in sorrow, making an open</p>

declaration of conscience. . . . I beseech you, brethren, let everyone who has sinned confess his sin while he is still in this world, while his confession is still admissible, while the satisfaction and remission made through the priests are still pleasing before the Lord” (ibid., 28).

“[S]inners may do penance for a set time, and according to the rules of discipline come to public confession, and by imposition of the hand of the bishop and clergy receive the right of Communion. [But now some] with their time [of penance] still unfulfilled . . . they are admitted to Communion, and their name is presented; and while the penitence is not yet performed, confession is not yet made, the hands of the bishop and clergy are not yet laid upon them, the Eucharist is given to them; although it is written, ‘Whosoever shall eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord’ [1 Cor. 11:27]” (Letters 9:2 [A.D. 253]).

“And do not think, dearest brother, that either the courage of the brethren will be lessened, or that martyrdoms will fail for this cause, that penance is relaxed to the lapsed, and that the hope of peace [i.e., absolution] is offered to the penitent. . . . For to adulterers even a time of repentance is granted by us, and peace is given” (ibid., 51[55]:20).

“But I wonder that some are so obstinate as to think that repentance is not to be granted to the lapsed, or to suppose that pardon is to be denied to the penitent, when it is written, ‘Remember whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works’ [Rev. 2:5], which certainly is said to him who evidently has fallen, and whom the Lord exhorts to rise up again

	<p>by his deeds [of penance], because it is written, 'Alms deliver from death' [Tob. 12:9]" (ibid., 51[55]:22).</p>
<p>Att. Russell on screen; no pictures or animations.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Conclusion</p> <p><<CAM 2>></p> <p>Well ... that's all for this episode! Thank you for tuning in to Wisdom of the Fathers!</p> <p>AND make sure to catch us next time ... where we discuss our next Church Father ... St. Ignatius of Antioch and what he had to say about bishops ... priests ... and deacons.</p> <p>I'm Russell Voris. God Bless!</p>