

Apologetic Fathers



St. Cyprian of Carthage

- 210-258 A.D.
- Lived in a time when Christians strongly sided with the idea that if you lapsed and denied Christ during persecution that you were to never be welcomed back into the church
- Despite sharing much of Tertullian's harsh theological ideology, he stood strongly on the side of those repentant after lapsing
- During a massive persecution by Decius, he chose to flee to escape death with hopes to return to shepherd his flock later
- When he returned, he found a deeply divided church
- Wrote many books to restoring unity in his flock
- In his writings, he did not indulge in speculations, but concerned himself with the needs of the hour, with practical aims and interests, appeals to Christian sentiments, and to Scripture
- Wrote many writings, 13 of them still exist called “treatises.”
- He taught that “he can no longer have God for his Father, who has not the Church for his mother.”
- There are some who believe he is the same St. Cyprian from the story of St. Justina, but more recent studies have shown he is not.
- Ultimately martyred in 258 AD during the Valerian persecution.

St. Hippolytus of Rome

- Was a Greek-Speaking priest in Rome in the late 2nd century
- Resembled Irenaeus in theology (was his student), Origen in scholarship, and Tertullian in attitudes, but was inferior to all three in originality and achievement.
- Best known today for his liturgical manual “The Apostolic Tradition,” whose central prayer is used even today in the Roman Catholic mass
- Most important work is the Philosophumena (Refutation of All Heresies), which finds the origin of Christian heresies in the philosophical schools of the Greeks



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Tertullian

- Lived 155-222 AD
 - Renowned lawyer before converting to Christianity after being inspired by martyrs
 - He and his writings were brash, bold, and confrontational.
 - Did not bother with beauty of form in his writing, as can be expected of a trained lawyer who aims to reach his point with the least allegory.
 - His faith: “It is to be believed because it is absurd.”
 - With Blessed Augustine, he is considered one of the greatest western theologians.
 - In a sense, he created the clear language of western theology.
 - His writings are apologetic; dogmatico-polemic; and practico-ascetical.
 - His chief work was against Marcion in five books written over a period of about twelve years, 200-212.
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Origen

- Lived 184-253 AD
- Born to Christian parents; father was martyred.
- Rented libraries overnight to read their books.
- Said that he would read while eating, walking, resting, etc.
- Considered one of the greatest minds in church.
- So great a mind that Pope Demetrius made him 2nd dean of the School of Alexandria
- He became a “teacher of teachers” and known, even till now, as the “father of the fathers.”
- The halls he rented were never large enough to accommodate his vast audiences.
- He was chased away by heretics in every location.
- Begin teaching openly in public by the rivers.
- He was/is famous for allegorical interpretations, which are going to play a key role in his non-saint status in the church.
- Believed to have written over 6,000 manuscripts!
- Writings are mainly intellectual.

