

## 118// HERE FOLLOWETH OF ST. HYPPOLITUS, MARTYR

**H** yppolitus buried the body of St. Laurence, and after, he came into his house, and gave the peace to his servants and to his chamberers, and communed them [gave them Holy Communion] with the sacrament of the altar, which Justin the priest had sacred [consecrated]. And the table was covered, but ere he took any meat [food], the knights came and haled him away, and brought him to the emperor.

### THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. HIPPOLYTUS AND ALL HIS HOUSEHOLD

And when Decius the emperor saw him, he smiling said to him: Art thou now made an enchanter, which hast borne away the body of Laurence?

And Hyppolitus said: That have I done, not as an enchanter, but as a Christian man.

Then Decius, being replenished with great fury, commanded that he should be despoiled of his habit that he ware [disrobed of this clothing that he wore] as a Christian man, and that his mouth should be beaten with stones.

To whom Hyppolitus said: Thou hast not despoiled me but rather clothed.

To whom Decius said: How is it that thou art now so foolish, that art not ashamed of thy nakedness? Now therefore make thou sacrifice, and thou shalt live, or else thou shalt perish with Laurence.

To whom Hyppolitus said: I would I might be made the example of St. Laurence, whom thou presumest to name with thy foul mouth and pollute.

Then Decius made him to be beaten with staves, and all to-rent with combs of iron. And he confessed with a clear voice that he was Christian. And when he had despised these torments, he did him to be clothed with the vesture of a knight that he tofore used, in exhorting him to receive his amity and his first chivalry.

And Hyppolitus said: I am the knight of Jesu Christ.

And then Decius, replenished with great wrath, delivered him to Valerian the provost, that he should take all his faculties, and slay him by divers torments.

*Hyppolitus is said of hyper, that is as much to say as upon, and litos, that is a stone, as who saith upon a stone, that is to understand, founded upon Christ. Or of in and polis, that is a city. Or Hyppolitus is as much to say as polished. He was well founded upon the stone Christ by constancy and steadfastness; he was in the city above by desire and coveting, he was polished by the bitterness of his torments.*

And then he found that all the meiny [entourage] of Hyppolitus' house were Christian, and all were brought tofore him, and when he would have constrained them to do sacrifice, one named Concordia, nurse of Hyppolitus, answered for them all: We had liefer die with our Lord chastely than live sinfully.

And then Decius, being present, commanded that she should be beaten with plummets [plumb-bobs] of lead unto the time that she gave over her spirit, and Hyppolitus said: Lord, I thank thee that thou hast sent my nurse tofore the sight of thy saints.

And after that Valerian did do lead Hyppolitus [had Hippolytus led] with his meiny to the gate Tyburtine, and Hyppolitus comforted them all and said: Brethren, dread ye not, for ye and I have one only God.

And then Valerian commanded that all they should be beheaded before Hyppolitus, and then he made Hyppolitus to be bound by the feet unto the necks of wild horses, and made him to be drawn among thorns, briars, and rocks, till he rendered and gave to God his spirit. He died about the year of our Lord two hundred and sixty-six. And then Justin the priest took the bodies of them, and buried them by the body of St. Laurence.

But he could not find the body of St. Concordia, for it was cast into a privy.

A knight, that was named Porphyry, weened that the blessed Concordia had gold and precious stones in her clothes, and came to a man named Irenæus, which was secretly a Christian man, and said to him: Keep my counsel secret, and draw Concordia out of the privy, for I trow that there be in her vestments gold and precious stones.

And he said: Show to me the place where she lieth and I shall keep thy counsel, and shall tell to thee what I shall find. And then he drew her out of the privy chamber, and found nothing, and then the knight fled away anon.

And Irenæus called to him a Christian man named Abundinus, and bare the body to St. Justin, and he took it devoutly and buried it by the body of St. Hyppolitus with the others. And when Valerian heard hereof he did do take Irenæus and Abundinus, and threw them all quick into the privy; and Justin took out their bodies and buried them with the other.

### **THE DEATHS OF VALERIAN AND DECIUS AND THE SUBSEQUENT CONVERSIONS**

**A**nd after these things done, Decius and Valerian ascended into a golden chariot for to go and torment Christian men, and Decius was ravished of a devil and cried: O Hyppolitus thou hast bounden me with sharp chains and leadest me away.

And Valerian cried also: O Laurence, thou drawest me with fiery chains.

And the same hour Valerian died; and Decius returned home and died the third day, tormented of the devil, and cried: Laurence, cease thou a little, I conjure thee to cease thy torments, and so died.

And when Tryphonia his wife, which was much cruel, saw this thing, she left all and took Cyrilla her daughter, and went to St. Justin and did do baptize her [had herself baptized] with many others. And that other day after, that as Tryphonia prayed, she gave up her spirit and died, and Justin the priest buried her body by St. Hyppolitus.

And forty-seven knights hearing that the queen and her daughter were become Christian, came with their wives to Justin the priest for to receive baptism.

Claudius the emperor, when Cyrilla would not do sacrifice, did do cut her throat [had her throat cut], and did do behead the other knights [had the other knights beheaded]. And the bodies were borne with the others into the field Veranus and there buried.

(And it is to be noted here expressly that Claudius succeeded Decius, which martyred St. Laurence and St. Hyppolitus, but he succeeded not Decius the emperor, for after the chronicles, Volusianus succeeded Decius, and Gallianus succeeded Volusianus, and Claudius succeeded Gallianus, so it behoveth that Gallianus had two names, that is to wit, Gallianus and Decius, and so saith Vincent in his chronicle and Godfrey in his book. Gallianus called one unto his help that was named Decius, whom he made Cæsar, but not emperor, so saith Richard in his chronicle.)

### **ST. AMBROSE'S REMARKS ON HIPPOLYTUS**

**O**f this martyr, saith Ambrose in his preface: The blessed martyr Hyppolitus considered that Jesu Christ was very duke, and he would be his knight, and had liefer be his knight than duke of knights, and he pursued not St. Laurence which was put under his keeping, but followed him, so that in suffering martyrdom he left the law of the tyrant, and came and possessed the treasure of very riches, which is the glory of the king perdurable [eternal] and perpetual.

### **THE CARTER WHO CURSED**

**T**here was a carter named Peter which yoked his oxen in the cart in the feast of Mary Magdalene, and followed his oxen and began to curse them, and anon the oxen and the cart were smitten with thunder. And that same Peter which had so cursed was tormented of cruel torments, for fire took him so that he burnt the sinews and the flesh from his thigh, and the bone appeared, and that the thigh and leg fell off. Then he went to a church of our Lady and hid his leg in a hole of the church, and prayed our Lady with tears devoutly for his deliverance.

And on a night the blessed Virgin with St. Hyppolitus came tofore him in a vision, and she prayed to Hyppolitus that he would re-establish Peter in his first health, and anon St. Hyppolitus took his leg in the hole, and took and set it in his place, like as one grafteth in a tree.

And he felt so much pain in that vision that he awoke and cried so loud that he awoke all the meiny [household]. And they arose and took light, and saw that Peter had two legs and two thighs, but they had supposed that it had been illusion, and they touched yet and yet eft again, and saw that he had verily his members, and then they awoke him and demanded of him how it happed.

And he weened that they had mocked him. And when he saw it, he was all abashed [disconcerted], yet nevertheless the new thigh was softer than the old, and he might not well sustain his body therewith. And because this miracle should be published, he halted a whole year, and then the blessed Virgin appeared to him and said to St. Hyppolitus that he should perform that which appertained to that cure, and then he awoke and felt himself all whole.

And then he entered into a recluage [hermitage]. To whom the devil appeared oft-time in the likeness of a woman naked, and joined to him naked, and the more he defended him the more the devil approached near, in tempting him shamefully, and when he had been shamefully travailed of her, he took the stole off a priest's neck and girt him with it, and anon the devil departed and left lying there a stinking and rotten carrion. And so great stench issued that there was none that saw it but said that it was the body of some dead woman which the devil had taken.

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The [iconography of St. Hippolytus](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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