Prayer
Scripture: 2 Timothy 3:10-17
Hymn: 524 "Unto the Hills"

A SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF HIPPOLYTUS (c. 170-c. 236)

Hippolytus was an educated, scholarly, saintly Greek in the
Roman Church at the time the Latin element was taking over control
of the church.

Hippolytus was the preaching presbyter and head of the catechetical
school of the Roman church.

Hippolytus was of the last great Greek scholar and the last of the
members of the Roman church to write in Greek. Latin was replacing Greek
as the language of the Roman church.

Hippolytus was the most important third century theologian of the
Roman church. He was a great champion of the Logos theology.

Hippolytus had been a pupil of Irenaeus.

Almost from the beginning of the bishopric of Zephyrinus (c. 198-
217 A.D.) Hippolytus clashed with and was very critical of the bishop
and his deacon, Kallistos. Hippolytus looked on the bishop as incompetent,
a simpleton, a weak leader, one who was gullible and one too greatly and
too easily influenced by the deacon. Hippolytus scorned the past of
Kallistos. He looked on the deacon as an opportunist without principle
and a muddle-head in theology. Hippolytus clashed with the bishop and
deacon on several points:
1. The Nature of the Church
2. How the Church should deal with apostates
3. The role of confessors
4. The unpardonable sins
5. Concubinage and Marriage
6. Whether clergy who had fallen into sin could resume
office
7. What to do with Adoptionist Monarchians and Modalistic
Monarchians
8. The doctrine of the Trinity

When Zephyrinus died in A.D. 217 the majority of the Roman church
chose Kallistos as bishop. A minority chose Hippolytus. The Roman church
split--Hippolytus is known as the first anti-pope. Hippolytus maintained
the church had remained a pure virgin following the apostolic teachings
until Kallistos led it astray and corrupted it.

SOME OF THE WORKS OF HIPPOLYTUS BEFORE THE SPLIT
The Syntagma of Against All Heresies
The Antichrist, c. 200 A.D.
A number of commentaries on books of the Bible, the most famous
of which were:
Commentary on Daniel, c. 204 A.D.
Commentary on the Canticle
Several treatises:
Blessing of Jacob (Genesis 49)
Blessing of Moses (Deuteronomy 33)
Narrative of David and Goliath (I Samuel 17)
A sermon entitled "On the Praise of the Lord and Savior", which
Origen of Alexandria heard while visiting in Rome in 212 A.D.
SOME OF THE WORKS OF HIPPOLYTUS AFTER THE SPLIT:
The Apostolic Tradition, c. 217 A.D.
Determination of the Date of Easter, 222 A.D.
The Chronicle, A.D. 234. Gives the history of the world from
the beginning to A.D. 234.
Some sermons, among which were: "Against the Jews"
"On the Passover"
"Homily on the Heresy of Noetus"
A number of commentaries on books of the Bible or portions of
Books; among them: "The Six Days of Creation," "What
Followed the Six Days," "The Blessing of Isaac," "The
Blessing of Balaam," "Moses' Song," "The Book of Ruth,
"Elkanah and Hannah," "The Witch of Endor," "Zacharias,
parts of Matthew, "The Two Thieves," "The Parable of the
Talents," and "The Apocalypse."
The Philosophoumena or Refutation of All Heresies, after 222 A.D.

THE ROMAN GOVERNMENT DURING THE LIFE OF HIPPOLYTUS:
The Persecution of Septimius Severus, 202, 203 A.D.
Philostratus' Life of Apollonius of Tyana. Julia Domna, the
wife of Septimius Severus commissioned the philosopher
to write in excellent rhetoric the life of this teacher
and miracle worker to show that he was greater than
Jesus of Nazareth.

Caracalla, the son of Septimius Severus and Julia Domna,
Murdered his brother, Geta, at the death of the father
and made himself sole emperor. Extended citizenship to
all free inhabitants of the empire in 212 A.D.
Severe persecution raged in North Africa and he closed
the schools in Alexandria, causing Origen to spend time
in Palestine.

A usurper, Macrinus, murdered Caracalla, and was emperor 217-218.
The army got rid of Macrinus and made Elagabalus emperor (218-222)
Julia Domna, wife of Septimius Severus and mother of
Caracalla, had a sister Julia Maesa, who had two daughters,
Julia Soaemias who married Varius Marcellus, and Julia Maesa.
Julia Soaemias and Varius Marcellus had a son named
Varius Avitus. Julia Soaemias and Julia Maesa passed
Varius Avitus off as the son of Julia Soaemias and Caracalla.
As emperor he took the name Elagabalus and continued to
hold office as priest of Baal. He let the Romans know he
regarded his priesthood as a higher office than emperorship.
He was not openly hostile to Christians. He designated his
cousin, Alexander Severus, the son of Julia Mamea, the
next emperor and his successor.

Alexander Severus (222-235) and Julia Mamea and the Christians
Had Origen come to Antioch to lecture on Christianity and
put up a bust of Christ in their chapel, c. 214, 215 A.D.
Alexander Severus as emperor awarded disputed property
to the Christians for a church rather than to a pagan
for a bakery.
Alexander Severus was so impressed with the learning of the
Christian Julius Africanus that he entrusted him with
the building of his library in Rome and made him librarian.
Maximinus (235-238) encouraged a mob to kill Alexander Severus
and his mother; he renewed the edicts and persecution
against the Christians.
Gordian (238-244) ignored the Christians.
Philip the Arabian (244-249) was friendly towards the Christians,
corresponding with Origen.
THE APOSTOLIC TRADITION OF HIPPOLYTUS
His theme: "The Tradition", our teacher. It had continued uncorrupted until the bishopric of Kallistos.
The Organization of the Church:
How to ordain a bishop
How to ordain a presbyter
How to ordain a deacon
The other offices of the church: confessors, widows, readers, virgins, subdeacons, healers.
The catechumenate and who may be admitted and how they are prepared for baptism.
How to baptize
How to conduct the Lord's Supper
Prayer, fasting and hospitality
Offering the first fruits
The work of deacons
Church attendance
Hours of Prayer and the sign of the Cross
Warning against heresy.

THE LATER YEARS AND DEATH OF HIPPOLYTUS
When Kallistos was murdered his congregation chose Urban as bishop (222-230) and the schism continued with Hippolytus as anti-bishop.
Pontian was chosen bishop at the death of Urban and served 230-235. Maximinus renewed the persecution and condemned both Pontian and Hippolytus to the salt mines in 235 A.D.
The restoration of unity to the Roman Church: in the mines Pontian and Hippolytus were reconciled, Hippolytus sent word to his congregation to return to fellowship with the majority and not to choose a bishop to replace him. Pontian resigned as bishop and urged the united church to choose a new bishop. Anteros was chosen but lived only about a year (235-236). The Roman church chose Fabian who was bishop from 236 to 250 A.D.
Both Pontian and Hippolytus died or were killed in the mines in 236. Pontian secured the bodies of both bishops and brought them back to Rome for burial. Pontian was buried in the Cemetery of Kallistos. Hippolytus was buried near his church. His followers were allowed to put up a statue of him sitting in the chair of a bishop. On the back of the chair was carved the titles of his works. This statue was rediscovered in 1551 and is now in the Lateran museum, minus the head.

THE PLACE OF HIPPOLYTUS IN HISTORY
As the Roman church became Latin the Greek works of Hippolytus fell into disuse and obscurity. The East preserved them. The baptism of blood covers all sins. The Roman church forgot Hippolytus was a schismatic bishop. The idea grew up that he had been bishop of the church of the port—a fictitious church. Many legends grew up around his name—such as his fighting with St. George against dragons. He became a shadowy figure —a saintly martyr. Many fictitious works were ascribed to him.