

March 18

Cyril of Jerusalem (ca. 315-386/7) pastor

Cyril, a pastor of the church of Jerusalem, died in that city on March 18 of the year 386 or 387.

He was born around the year 315 near the Holy City, but we have no reliable information about his childhood. We do know for certain that he was ordained a priest at the age of thirty. Just over three years later, he became bishop of Jerusalem following a highly controversial election.

Doubts and slander followed him for the rest of his life, due in particular to the fact that the two bishops who had ordained him were Arian sympathizers.

Despite the humiliation he suffered, Cyril listened constantly to Scripture and developed a *sensus fidei* that made him one of the great defenders of apostolic faith. As a result, he was condemned to exile three times by emperors or synods with Arian sympathies. Driven by a sincere spirit of charity and attentiveness to the poor, Cyril was also passionately committed to the religious education of the faithful. His Catecheses, which are clearly biblically inspired - although their authorship is not always certain - made him one of the early Church's greatest proclaimers of the Gospel.

There is, however, a dark page of Cyril's biography that cannot be hidden, although it does not lessen the greatness of the example he left in other areas. Like other church fathers, Cyril did not fully understand the mystery of Israel, and his vehement protests against the rebuilding of the Jerusalem Temple contributed significantly to the spread of anti-Judaism, which the Church began to reject only sixteen centuries later.

BIBLICAL READINGS:

Prov 4:1-9; Jn 16:12-15

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:

Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem, teacher of the faith

WESTERN CATHOLICS:

Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop and doctor of the church (Roman calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (9 baramhat/maggabit):

Konon of Isauria (3rd cent.), martyr (Coptic Orthodox Church)

Abrianus (4th cent.), martyr (Coptic Catholic Church)

LUTHERANS:

Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop and doctor of the church

Marie Schlieps (d. 1919), witness to the point of bloodshed in Latvia

MARONITES:

Cyril of Jerusalem, confessor

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem

Invention of the relics of Theodore of Smolensk and his sons (1463; Russian Church)

EAST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:

Cyril of Jerusalem, bishop (Malabar Church)