

Festivals

***Basques have a tradition of gathering on Saint Agatha's eve (*Santa Ageda bezpera* in Basque) and going round the village. Homeowners can choose to hear a song about her life, accompanied by the beats of their walking sticks on the floor or a prayer for those deceased in the house. After that, the homeowner donates food to the chorus. This song has varying lyrics according to the local tradition and the Basque language. An exceptional case was that of 1937, during the Spanish Civil War, when a version appeared that in the Spanish language praised the Soviet ship Komsomol, which had sunk while carrying Soviet weapons to the Second Spanish Republic.

An annual festival to commemorate the life of Saint Agatha takes place in Catania, Sicily, from February 3rd to the 5th. The festival culminates in a great all-night procession through the city for which hundreds of thousands of the city's residents turn out.

***(excerpted from: en.wikipedia.org)

Prayers to Saint Agatha

Lord God, you showered heavenly gifts on the virgin Agatha. Hear the prayers of those who recall her devoted life and who ask her to intercede for them in their necessity.

(Mention your intention here...)

Help us to imitate her virtue during our earthly life and enjoy eternal happiness with her in heaven. Amen

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O God, Who among the other marvels of Thy power, hast granted even to the weaker sex the victory of martyrdom; mercifully grant: that we who celebrate the Heavenly birthday of blessed Agatha, Thy Virgin and Martyr, may by her example, draw nearer to Thee.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son Who livest and reignest world without end. Amen

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Saint Agatha

Feast day February 5th

Patron of:

**Breast Cancer, Breast Disease
Natural Disasters and Sterility**



... "because I would not obey the commands of rulers,
my breasts were lacerated."

Prayer: Saint Agatha, you suffered sexual assault and indignity because of your faith. Help heal all those who are survivors of sexual assault and protect those women who are in danger. Amen.

Saint Agatha

(The name Agatha means "good")

* We have little reliable information about this martyr, who has been honored since ancient times, and whose name is included in the canon of the Mass. She was born in Catania, Sicily and was said to be young, beautiful and rich, she belonged to an important family. When she was young Agatha dedicated her life to God and resisted any man who wanted to marry her or have sex with her. One of the men, Quintian, was of a high enough rank that he felt he could force her to acquiesce. Knowing she was a Christian in a time of persecution, he had her arrested and brought before the judge - - himself. He expected her to give in when faced with torture and possible death, but she simply affirmed her belief in God by praying: "Jesus Christ, Lord of all, you see my heart, you know my desires. Possess all that I am. I am your sheep: make me worthy to overcome the devil."

Legend tells us that Quintian imprisoned her in a brothel in order to get her to change her mind. Quintian brought her back before him after she had suffered a month of assault and humiliation in the brothel, but Agatha had never wavered, proclaiming that her freedom came from Jesus. Quintian sent her to prison, instead of back to the brothel - - a move intended to make her more afraid, but which probably was a great relief to her. When she continued to profess her faith in Jesus, Quintian had her tortured. He refused her any medical care but God gave her all the care she needed in the form of a vision of St. Peter.

*(excerpted from: www.catholic.org)

** After rejecting Quintian's advances, she was beaten, imprisoned, tortured, her breasts were crushed and cut off. She told the judge, "Cruel man, have you forgotten your mother and the breast that nourished you, that you dare to mutilate me this way?" Imprisoned further, then rolled on live coals, she was near death when an earthquake struck. In the destruction, the magistrate's friend was crushed, and the magistrate fled.

Agatha thanked God for an end to her pain, and died after saying a final prayer: "**Lord, my Creator, You have always protected me from the cradle; You have taken me from the love of the world and given me patience to suffer. Receive my soul.**"

Her prayer on being arrested: "**Jesus Christ, Lord of all things! You see my heart, you know my desires. Possess all that I am - you alone. I am your sheep; make me worthy to overcome the devil.**"

Legend says that carrying her veil, taken from her tomb in Catania, in procession has averted eruptions of Mount Etna. Her intercession is reported to have saved Malta from Turkish invasion in 1551.

The following is from a homily on Saint Agatha by Saint Methodius of Sicily

My fellow Christians, our annual celebration of a martyr's feast has brought us together. Agatha achieved renown in the early Church for her noble victory. For her, Christ's death was recent, his blood was still moist. Her robe is the mark of her faithful witness to Christ.

Agatha, the name of our saint, means "good." She was truly good, for she lived as a child of God. Agatha, her goodness coincides with her name and her way of life. She won a good name by her noble deeds, and by her name she points to the nobility of those deeds. Agatha, her mere name wins all men over to her company. She teaches them by her example to hasten with her to the true Good, God alone.

** (excerpted from: www.livingwatercommunity.com)