

Christina refused more earnestly than ever to obey, and Julian ordered her to be cast into the furnace, which meanwhile had been prepared. The order was executed, and Christina remained in it until the fifth day, unharmed, as, in ages past, the three companions of Daniel had been in the furnace of Babylon. She also imitated these in constantly praising God and giving thanks for so many mercies received. Julian ascribed this miracle to magic, and following the advice of a magician, he had Christina thrown into a dark cavern, into which this magician had charmed a great many of the most venomous animals. The holy Virgin once more signed herself with the cross, and none of the animals touched her. She stood in the midst of them, giving praise to the Almighty, her Protector. To prevent this they tore out her tongue, at the command of Julian; but even then she ceased not praising God. This new miracle converted many to the Christian faith, and the tyrant commanded them at length to fasten her to a stake and pierce her with arrows. While they bound her fast, her heart was filled with the desire to behold in heaven Him for whom she had suffered so much on earth. She therefore called on God to impart to her the long-desired crown of martyrdom. Her prayer was answered, for one of the arrows found the way to her heart, and her heroic soul went to Him by whose mighty assistance she had conquered three tyrants. Her glorious death took place in the year of our Lord three hundred. We conclude the life of this Saint with the words of St. Augustine:

"When we consider the perseverance of a human being, tortured in so many ways, it seems incredible. But when we think of the omnipotence of the Most High, the relation will not be deemed impossible."

PRAYER TO ST. CHRISTINA AS YOUR PATRON SAINT

Saint Christina, whom I have chosen as my special patron,
pray for me that I, too, may one day glorify
the blessed Trinity in heaven.

Obtain for me your lively faith, that I may consider all persons,
things, and events in the light of almighty God.

Pray, that I may be generous in making sacrifices of
temporal things to promote my eternal interests, as you so wisely did.

Set me on fire with a love for Jesus, that I may thirst
for His sacraments and burn with zeal for the spread of His kingdom.

By your powerful intercession, help me in the performance
of my duties to God, myself and all the world.

Win for me the virtue of purity and a great
confidence in the Blessed Virgin.

Protect me this day, and every day of my life.

Keep me from mortal sin.

Obtain for me the grace of a happy death. Amen.

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Saint Christina

Feast Day: July 24th



The meaning of the name Christina is "*Little Christ*"

Saint Christina, Virgin and Martyr

by Father Francis Xavier Weninger, 1876

Those who consider the life and the different kinds of martyrdom of this holy Virgin, and do not remember what we said in the preface to these volumes, may easily be tempted to suppose that much of what we relate is impossible, and the work of imagination. But as the whole history is founded on indubitable and unobjectionable testimony, we shall relate her life plainly and faithfully. We should remember that God chose this holy Virgin, in preference to innumerable others, to honor and glorify His holy faith among the blind heathen, to confound the tyrants and persecutors of Christendom, and to reveal to the world the wonders of His Omnipotence.

The Saint was a native of Tyro, in Tuscany, where her father Urban, was prefect. He was a sworn enemy to the Christians, and hardly passed a day on which he did not call someone of the faithful into his presence, and doom him to suffering and to death. Christina, who on seeing this, observed at the same time how fearless and happy the Christians were during their torments, was curious to know what kind of men they were, why they were thus persecuted, and what gave them strength to bear so uncomplainingly, nay, so cheerfully, the sufferings they endured. When instructed about all this, the grace of God worked so strongly in her, that she felt an intense desire to be, by means of holy Baptism, numbered among the Christians. She rested not until her desire was fulfilled, and at the age of nine years, she received holy Baptism and with it the name of Christina. Her zeal was greater than could have been expected at her tender age. She secretly took her father's idols, composed of gold and silver, and breaking them into pieces with the assistance of others, divided them among the poor. Her father, almost beside himself with rage when he was informed of this, resolved to avenge, with his daughter's blood, the dishonor done to the gods, but not until he had endeavored to win her by kindness from the faith of Christ. Hence he called her to him and all alone with her, urged her, with many manifestations of kindness and at last with menaces, to forsake Christ. Christina, however, said fearlessly: "Do with me whatever you like, my dear father; you can take my life, but the faith of Christ you have no power to tear out of my heart. My Saviour will strengthen me to suffer patiently all that you have threatened." Scarcely had she spoken these words, when the inhuman father commanded the executioners whom he had called to scourge her most cruelly over her whole body.

Christina gave no signs of pain during this suffering. After this, the tyrant ordered that the wounds she had received should be enlarged with iron combs and whips with sharp points, which was done with such ferocity, that whole pieces of flesh were torn from the tender body of the virgin. Christina stood at first immovable with her eyes turned to heaven, and then praised and thanked the Almighty for so visibly aiding her to bear her pains. The father,—who was no father, but a savage beast,—still more embittered by her conduct, ordered an iron wheel to be brought.

Christina was then bound upon it, oil was poured over her, and then the wheel was raised in such a manner that it could be turned. When this was done, a fire was prepared under it, in order slowly to roast the maiden. Almighty God, however, so effectually strengthened His heroic confessor, that she sang loudly during this terrible torment. She remained unhurt by the flames, while many of the spectators were seized by them and severely injured. Thy tyrant, astonished at this miracle, would still not relent, but ordered her to be dragged to a dungeon, with the intention to renew her torture on the following day.

Hardly had Christina entered the dungeon, when an angel of the Most High appeared to her and healed her wounds, encouraged her to persevere, and gave her assurance of divine assistance. When her father was informed that she was so miraculously healed, he immediately sent some executioners into the prison, with orders to tie a large stone around her neck, and cast her into a lake, so that nothing further might be seen or heard of her. But the same angel who had visited her the day before, carried her safely to the shore. Christina was sent again to the dungeon, and Urban thought of new ways and means to torment her. But when morning dawned, he was found dead in his bed. He had probably died from a stroke of apoplexy, brought on by his uncontrolled anger.

Thus God punished, by a sudden and unhappy death, his inhuman wickedness. Christina was much more pained by the eternal destruction of her father, than by all the tortures she had suffered. The latter, however did not end with her father's death: for Dio, who was Urban's successor, not only in his functions, but also in his cruelty, had Christina brought before him, and as she remained firm in her refusal to abandon the Christian faith, he commanded an iron cradle to be constructed and filled with boiling oil and tar, into which Christina should be cast. The heroine evinced not the slightest fear of this instrument of torture, but signing herself with the sign of the Cross, she said to the soldiers who cast her into the cradle: "Well have you reason to lay me like a child in a cradle; for it is hardly a year since I was born in holy baptism." She remained in it a considerable time; but when they at length perceived that she neither felt pain nor was in the least harmed, they took her out and brought her into the temple of Apollo, commanding her to sacrifice to him. No sooner, however, had Christina set foot in the temple, than she made the sign of the Cross, and the idol, falling from the altar upon the ground, was broken into a thousand pieces.

At the same moment, the prefect Dio, struck with apoplexy, sank dead upon the earth. The soldiers, who had brought Christina into the temple, were terrified by this twofold wonder, and freeing the Virgin from her fetters, they cried aloud: "Truly, the God of the Christians is the only true God." Many of those present abandoned idolatry and became converts to the Christian faith. When Julian, Dio's successor, heard of Christina and the sudden end of his predecessor, he feared that the people might accuse him of cowardice, if he did not continue the process against a weak woman. Hence he said to her: "Thou must either immediately sacrifice to the gods, or I will cast thee alive into a burning furnace."