

lover of God. Her feast day is February 6th.

She and Theophil are mention in the Roman Martyrology as martyrs of Caesarea in Cappadocia. She is officially recognized as a saint, but because there is scarcely any non-legendary knowledge about her, she is no longer (since 1969) included in the General Roman Calendar.

The earliest record that mentions Dorothy is found in the Martyrologium Hieronymianum. This first record contains only three basic facts: the day of martyrdom, the place where it occurred, and her name and that of Theophilus.

Dorothy's cult became widespread in Europe during the Middle Ages. She was venerated in Europe in the seventh century. In late medieval Sweden she was considered the fifteenth member of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, and in art she occurred with Saint Barbara, Catherine of Alexandria and Margaret of Antioch, forming with them a quartet of female saints called Huvudjungfrur meaning "the main virgins."

Dorothy's life and martyrdom was the basis of Philip Massinger and Thomas Dekker's the Virgin martyr printed in 1622. The congregation of the sisters of Saint Dorothy is a convent of active nuns, occupied with teaching and the cultivation of flowers and produce. The order is named for Dorothy of Caesarea.

*(excerpted from: www.catholic.org; www.ttstm.com; [//saints.sqpn.com](http://saints.sqpn.com))

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Saint Dorothy of Caesarea

Feast Day: February 6



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*According to her apochryphal tradition, Dorothy was a resident of Caesarea, Cappadocia, who when she refused to sacrifice to the gods during Emperor Diocletian's persecution of the Christians, was tortured by the governor Sapriscus. Dorothy's parents had been martyrs. This filled her with a painful mixture of joy and sorrow since she rejoiced at their courage and reward but mourned the world's loss. Diocletian had ordered them dead as part of his widespread persecutions and those who were hoping to gain the emperor's favor were only all too willing to spill blood to earn it.

Dorothy was also a Christian but there were other plans for her. The governor – Sapriscus - had her brought before him and he demanded that she take a husband. He did this because he knew she had committed herself to celibacy and devotion to Jesus and he felt that if he could shake her from this devotion, then he would be able to bring about her conversion to the Empire and away from Christianity.

She refused immediately, insisting that she was already married to Jesus, and was forced upon the rack and stretched. The tension was set high enough to bring agony but not death and she was offered a choice: take a husband, renounce your faith, and live or refuse and die. She refused.

Sapriscus was not ready to kill the woman, yet, and had another idea for how he might affect her conversion. After all, Christians seemed to be producing conversions constantly – surely the emperor could convert people just as easily. He sent her to prison and had two women – Christina and Callista – visit her daily. Christina and Callista had once been Christian and had renounced their faith under threat of torture and death. When faced with the terror of the Empire, they folded and bowed themselves before the emperor as lord. After their bitter renunciations, they fell headlong into lives of sin and darkness. Their everyday was marked by regret and sorrow but they did not admit to erring by renouncing their faith – sometimes, we hold onto a bad decision because it is the only thing we feel we have left to hold onto.

They sought out lives of empty pleasure and sin to fill the hole that had been left in them but found no respite in evil. Their task was to convert Dorothy away from her faith as they had been converted but it was Christina and Callista that were converted back by, Dorothy, to the faith they had abandoned. They found joy again for it with their lives – being tied together and boiled to death – but this they did willingly and Sapriscus brought Dorothy before him again.

When Dorothy arrived she thanked Sapriscus for the opportunity to bring life to her sisters walking in death and made sure he knew she would not have had the opportunity if not for his imprisonment and scheming. He offered her one last chance – perhaps hoping that the brutality of the deaths of Christina and Calista might have changed her mind – but was not surprised when she refused. He ordered her to be decapitated in public. As she was being taken away from Sapriscus, one of his advisers, a pagan lawyer said to her in mockery, “bride of Christ, send me some fruits from your bridegroom's garden. You are married to Jesus, right? Please send some of your husband's apples or roses from his garden to me when you see him.”

He laughed, but Dorothy responded, “I shall do it.” As they dragged her to the place of her execution she was met by a young girl bearing a gift of three roses and three apples on a tray. Dorothy recognized that this “young girl” was an angel sent by God and asked the girl to take the roses and the apples to the advisor who had mocked her. She was then bound and decapitated. She became a martyr.

The pagan lawyer, however was shocked to receive a gift from a young girl – three roses and three apples. He was shocked because – apples and roses did not grow in Caesarea at that time of the year – and he was shaken. Soon after, he converted to Christianity and followed after Dorothy's husband whom he had mocked. Shortly before being minded himself, he changed his name to Theophilus which means