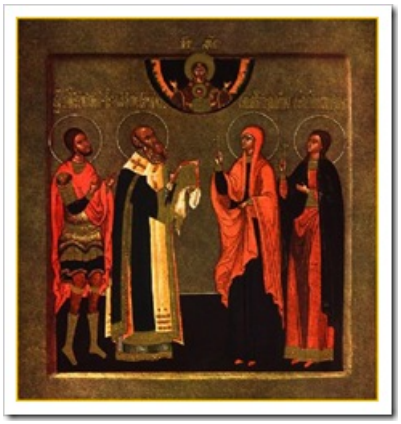
St. Eupraxia, Virgin, of Tabenna

Commemorated on July 25



St. Eupraxia was daughter of Constantinople Dignitary Antigonos, a relative of Emperor Theodosius the Great.

Antigonus and his wife Eupraxia were pious and gave generously to the poor and hungry. Eupraxia gave birth to a daughter, whom they also named Eupraxia. Shortly after the childâ€™s birth, Antigonos died, and the mother withdrew from the imperial court. She took her daughter to Egypt on the pretext of inspecting her properties. However, she was in fact headed to a womenâ€™s monastery. She wanted to give a sizeable contribution to the monastery, but their abbess, Theophila, refused, saying that the nuns had devoted themselves to God and did not have need of any earthly riches. The abbess consented to accept only candles, incense and oil.

At this time, the younger Eupraxia was seven years old. She came to like the monastic way of life and decided to remain at the monastery. Her pious mother did not stand in the way of her daughterâ€™s wish. Leaving her daughter at the monastery, Eupraxia asked her to be humble, never to dwell upon her noble descent, and to serve God and her sisters.

Shortly after returning to Constantinople, the mother died. Having learned of her death, Emperor Theodosius sent a letter to St. Eupraxia the Younger reminding her that her parents had betrothed her to the son of a certain senator, intending that she marry him when she reached age fifteen. The Emperor asked that she honor the commitment made by her parents. St. Eupraxia replied that she had already become a bride of Christ, and she asked that the emperor dispose of her properties, distributing the proceeds for the use of the Church and the needy.

When she reached the age of maturity, St. Eupraxia intensified her ascetic efforts. At first she ate only once a day, then after two days, three days, and finally, once a week. She combined her fasting with her monastic obediences. She worked in the kitchen by washing dishes, swept the premises, and served the sisters. The sisters loved the humble Eupraxia. Unfortunately, one of the sisters envied her and explained away all her efforts as a desire for glory. This sister began to reproach Eupraxia, but the holy virgin instead humbly asked forgiveness.

The devil caused St. Eupraxia much misfortune. Once, while getting water, she fell into a well, and the sisters pulled her out. Another time, St. Eupraxia was chopping wood for the kitchen and cut herself on the leg with an axe. While carrying an armload of wood up the ladder, she stepped on the hem of her garment. She fell, and a sharp splinter cut her near the eyes. St. Eupraxia endured all these trials with patience, and when the sisters asked her to rest, she would not agree to do so.

The Lord granted St. Eupraxia the gift of wonderworking. Through her prayers she healed a deaf, dumb and crippled child, and she delivered a woman from possession by the devil. The townspeople began to bring the sick for healing to the monastery. The holy virgin humbled herself all the more, counting herself as least among the sisters.

Before the death of St. Eupraxia, the abbess had a vision of the holy virgin being transported to a splendid palace before the Throne of the Lord who was surrounded by holy angels. In the vision, the Holy Theotokos showed St. Eupraxia around the luminous chamber and said that She had made it ready for her and that she would come into this habitation after ten days.

The abbess and the sisters wept bitterly, not wanting to lose St. Eupraxia. The saint herself, in learning about the vision, wept because she was not prepared for death. She asked the abbess to pray that the Lord would grant her one year more for repentance. The abbess consoled St. Eupraxia and said that the Lord would grant her His great mercy. Suddenly, St. Eupraxia realized that she was not well, and soon peacefully died at the age of thirty.

By permission of the Orthodox Church in America (www.oca.org)