

St. Aquilina of Byblos



Commemorated on June 13

St. Aquilina, a native of the Phoenician city of Byblos, suffered under Emperor Diocletian in the third century. She was raised in Christian piety by her parents. When she was only twelve years old, she persuaded a pagan friend to convert to Christ. One of the servants of Governor Volusian accused her of teaching others to reject paganism. She was taken before the governor where she firmly confessed her belief and said that she would not renounce Him. Volusian tried to influence her through persuasion and flattery, but seeing her confidence, he ordered her to be tortured.

She was struck upon the face, and then stripped and beaten with whips. Her torturers asked, “Where then is your God? Let Him come and take you out of our hands.” But the saint answered, “The Lord is here with me invisibly, and the more I suffer, the more strength and endurance will He give me.”

Heated metal rods were then drilled through her ears, and St. Aquilina fell down as if dead. The torturers thought that she had actually died, and gave orders that her body be thrown outside the city to be eaten by dogs. However, later that night, a holy angel appeared to St. Aquilina, roused her and said, “Arise and be healed. Go and denounce Volusian, so that he and his plans may come to nothing.”

St. Aquilina went back before the court and stood before Governor Volusian. Seeing her, he called for his servants and ordered them to keep watch over her until morning.

The next morning he sentenced St. Aquilina to death, saying that she was a sorceress who refused his imperial decrees. While being led to her execution, St. Aquilina prayed and gave thanks to God for allowing her to suffer for His Holy Name.

A voice was heard in answer to her prayer, summoning her to the heavenly Kingdom. Before the executioner could carry out the sentence, the martyr gave up her spirit to God. Still, the executioner cut off her head although she was already dead.

Christians piously buried the martyr’s body. Later, her relics were taken to Constantinople and placed in a church named in her honor.

Troparion (Tone 4) “

Your lamb Aquilina, calls out to You, O Jesus, in a loud voice:
“I love You, my Bridegroom, and in seeking You I endure suffering.
In baptism I was crucified so that I might reign in You,
and I died so that I might live with You.
Accept me as a pure sacrifice,
for I have offered myself in love.”
Through her prayers save our souls, since You are merciful.

Kontakion (Tone 3) “

You ascended to the heights through martyrdom, all-honorable Aquilina,
having purified your soul through the virtues of your virginity.
You were wounded with love for Christ your bridegroom,
before whom you stand rejoicing with the angels;
together with them unceasingly pray for us all.

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