

St. Eudokia of Heliopolis



Commemorated on March 1

St. Eudokia was a Samaritan, a native of the city of Heliopolis in Phoenicia, who lived during the reign of Trajan in the early second century. She was a pagan and led a sinful life. Her soul was deadened and her heart hardened.

Eudokia awoke one night at midnight and heard singing from the house of a Christian woman who lived nearby. A monk was reading from a book which described the Last Judgment, the punishment of sinners, and the reward of the righteous. The grace of God touched Eudokia's heart, and she grieved because of her great wealth and her sinful life.

In the morning, Eudokia called on the monk whose rule of prayer she had heard the previous night. His name was Germanus, and he had just returned to his monastery from a pilgrimage to the holy places. Eudokia listened to his guidance, and her soul was filled with joy and love for Christ. She asked Germanus to stay in her home for a week, during which she secluded herself in her room, spending her time in fasting and prayer.

Germanus told her to give away her wealth and to forget her previous life. Shortly thereafter, Eudokia received holy Baptism from Bishop Theodotus of Heliopolis. She entered a monastery and took upon herself strict acts of penitence. The Lord granted forgiveness to St. Eudokia and endowed her with spiritual gifts.

After she had become the head of the monastery, a young pagan named Philostrates (one of her former lovers) heard of her conversion to Christianity and longed to see her again. Aflame with passion, he came into the monastery disguised as a monk and began to urge Eudokia to return to Heliopolis to resume her former life. "May God rebuke you and not allow you to leave these premises," Eudokia cried. Philostrates fell down dead before her. Fearing that she had served as an accomplice to murder, the sisters intensified their prayer and asked the Lord to reveal to them His will.

The Lord appeared to St. Eudokia in a vision and said: "Arise, Eudokia, and pray for the resurrection of the dead man." Through Eudokia's prayers, Philostrates was revived. Having been restored to life, he begged the Eudokia to forgive him. After he was baptized, he traveled back to Heliopolis. From that time onwards, he never forgot the mercy of God that was shown him, and he started on the way to repentance.

Some time passed, and another situation occurred. Inhabitants of Heliopolis reported to Governor Aurelian that Eudokia had taken gold and silver out of the city and was concealing it at her monastery. Aurelian sent a detachment of soldiers to confiscate the "treasures." For three days, the soldiers tried in vain to approach the walls of the monastery, but an invisible power of God guarded it.

Governor Aurelian again sent soldiers to the monastery, this time under the command of his own son. But on the very first day of the journey, Aurelian's son injured his leg and soon died. Philostrates counseled Aurelian to write to Mother Eudokia, imploring her to revive the youth. The Lord, in His infinite mercy, and through the prayers of St. Eudokia, restored the young man to life. Having witnessed this great miracle, Governor Aurelian and his associates believed in Christ and were baptized.

When the persecutions against the Christians intensified, Eudokia was arrested and brought before Governor Diogenes to be tortured. During Eudokia's tortures, the military commander Diodorus received news of the sudden death of his wife. In despair, he rushed to St. Eudokia, and begged her to pray for his departed wife. Eudokia, filled with great faith, turned to God with her prayers and asked Him to return Diodorus's wife to life. As eyewitnesses of the power and grace of the Lord, Diodorus and Diogenes believed in Christ and were baptized together with their families. St. Eudokia lived for a period of time at Diodorus's house and enlightened the newly-illuminated Christians.

Once, the only son of a certain widow, was bitten by a snake while working in the garden and died. His mother wept bitterly, and asked Diodorus to resurrect him. Learning of the woman's grief, St. Eudokia said to Diodorus, "The time is at hand for you to show faith in the Almighty God Who hears the prayers of penitent sinners and in His mercy grants them forgiveness."

Diodorus was upset and did not consider himself worthy of such boldness before the Lord, but he obeyed St. Eudokia. He prayed and in the name of Christ he commanded the dead one to rise, and before the eyes of everyone present, the youth revived.

Thereafter, St. Eudokia returned to her monastery, where she lived in asceticism for fifty-six years.

After Diogenes died, Vicentius was made the new governor and became a fierce persecutor of Christians. Having learned of the accomplishments of St. Eudokia, he gave orders for her execution. The holy martyr was beheaded on March 1, 107.

Troparion (Tone 5) –

O Eudoxia, when godly fear entered your heart,
You abandoned the glory of the world,
And hastened to God the Word.
You took his yoke on your flesh
And shed your blood in a contest surpassing nature.
O glorious martyr,
Entreat Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

Kontakion (Tone 4) –

He, who was pleased to raise you from the depths of perdition
To the summit of godliness,
Has also made you illustrious through your contest.
He has granted you the grace of healing,
O righteous martyr and equal to the angels beseech Him to save us, O Eudoxia.
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