

St. Cecilia

Patron Saint: Music & Musicians

Feast Day: November 22

From *The Lives of the Saints* by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, M.A., published in 1914 in Edinburgh:

It is said that Saint Cecilia was born of a patrician family in Rome and raised as a Christian. She wore a coarse horsehair garment beneath her clothes of rank, fasted, and vowed herself to God. Against her will, she was married by her father to a young, pagan patrician named Valerian. While everyone sang and danced at their wedding, Cecilia sat apart, saying only the Psalms. It is said that she heard the choirs of Angels singing to



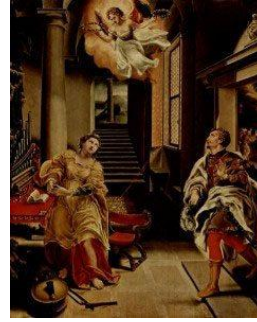
her through her prayers. Valerian turned out to be a man of great understanding. On their wedding night, she told Valerian, **“I have an angel of God watching over me. If you touch me in the way of marriage, he will be angry, and you will suffer. But if you respect my maidenhood, he will love you as he loves me.”**

Valerian replied, **“Show me this angel.”** She told him that if he believed in the living and one true God and was baptized, he would see the angel. Thus, she persuaded Valerian to respect her vow of virginity.

He was impressed and attracted by his wife’s Christian graces, and so Valerian was baptized by Pope Saint Urban (which would be c. 222-230). When he returned to Cecilia, he found her standing by the side of an angel as she promised. The angel told him: **“I have a crown of flowers for each of you. They have been sent from paradise as a sign of the life you are both to lead. If you are faithful to God, He will reward you with the everlasting perfumes of heaven.”**

The angel then crowned Cecilia with roses and Valerian with a wreath of lilies. The delightful fragrance of the flowers filled the whole house. At this point, Valerian’s brother, Tiburtius, appeared. He, too, was offered salvation if he would renounce

false gods. Cecilia converted him, and he was baptized.



From that time the two young men dedicated themselves to good works. Because of their ardor in burying the bodies of martyred Christians, they were arrested. The prefect Almachius told them that if they would sacrifice to the gods, they could go free. They refused, and Valerian rejoiced when he was handed over to be scourged.

The prefect wanted to give them another chance, but his assessor warned him that they would simply use the interim to give away their possessions so that they couldn’t be confiscated. They were beheaded in Pagus Triopius, four miles from Rome. With them was an officer named Maximus, who had declared himself a Christian after witnessing their fortitude.

Cecilia buried the three and then decided to turn her home into a place of worship. Her religion was discovered, and she was asked to refute her faith. She converted those who were sent to convince her to sacrifice to the gods. When Pope Urban visited her at home, he baptized over 400 people.

In court, Almachius debated with her for some time. She was sentenced to be suffocated to death in the bathroom of her house. The furnace was fed seven times its normal amount of fuel, but the steam and heat failed to stifle her. A soldier sent to behead her struck at her neck three times, and she was left dying on the floor. She lingered for three days, during which time the Christians thronged to her side, and she formally made over her house to Urban and committed her household to his care.

She was buried next to the papal crypt in the catacombs of Saint Callixtus. In 817, Pope Saint Paschal I discovered her grave, which had been concealed from the Lombard invader Aistulf in 756, and translated her body to beneath the main altar of what was later called the titulus Sanctae Caeciliae, which translates as “the church founded by a lady named Cecilia.” In 1599, during the renovation of the church, Cardinal Sfondrati opened her tomb and found her holy remains incorrupt. Even the



green and gold of her rich robe had not been injured by time. Thousands had the privilege of seeing her in her coffin, and many have been blessed by miracles. The body disintegrated quickly after meeting with the air.

Under the high altar in Saint Cecilia's Church is a beautiful marble statue by Maderna portraying the "martyr" bathed in her blood as she fell after the stroke of the sword.

A replica of this statue occupies the original resting place of the saint in the Catacomb of Callixtus.



<https://www.discerninghearts.com/catholic-podcasts/st-cecilia-patroness-of-music/>

Praying the Chaplet of St. Cecilia

Opening Prayer:

St. Cecilia, Glorious Virgin and Martyr of Jesus Christ, I admire the courage with which you professed your faith in the face of severe persecution, and the generous love with which you offered your life in witness to your belief in the Blessed Trinity.

I thank God with you for the wonderful graces He had bestowed upon you to make your life holy and pleasing to Him even in the midst of the wealth that was yours. I thank Him for the privilege offered to you of receiving the glorious crown of martyrdom.

Saint Cecilia, I also admire the purity of love that bound you to the Savior, which was greater in your eyes than any human affection, so that you declared yourself before the enemies of the Church, "I am the bride of my Lord Jesus Christ."

Pray for me that in imitation of you I may keep my body pure and my soul holy, and that I may love Jesus with all my heart.

In these times so full of pleasure seeking and so lacking in faith, teach us to profess our faith courageously and to be willing to sacrifice ourselves in practicing it, so that our good example may lead others closer to Christ and the Church He as founded. Amen.

Using these Psalm meditations on the Pendant beads, 9 sets of Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be... closing with: St. Cecilia, Virgin and Martyr of Jesus Christ, pray for us. Amen.

1st Pendant *Hallelujah! Praise God in his holy sanctuary; give praise in the mighty dome of heaven. (PS 150: 1)*

2nd Pendant *Give praise for his mighty deeds, praise him for his great majesty. (PS 150:2)*

3rd Pendant *Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth; break into song; sing praise. (PS 98: 4)*

4th Pendant *Sing praise to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and melodious song. (PS 98:5)*

5th Pendant *With trumpets and the sound of the horn shout with joy to the King, the Lord. (PS 98:6)*

6th Pendant *Let the sea and what fills it resound, the world and those who dwell there (PS 98:7)*

7th Pendant *O Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, Let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. (PS 95: 1)*

8th Pendant *Sing to the Lord a new song, Sing to the Lord all the earth (PS 96: 1)*

9th Pendant *Sing to the Lord, bless His name, proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day (PS 96: 2)*

Closing Prayer:

O glorious St. Cecilia, virgin and martyr, You won the martyr's crown without renouncing your love for Jesus, the delight of your soul.

We ask that you help us to be faithful in our love for Jesus, that in the communion of saints, we may praise Him twice in our song of rejoicing for the blood that He shed which gave us the grace to accomplish His will on earth.

O Eternal God, Who gave us, in the person of St. Cecilia, a powerful protectress, grant that after having faithfully passed our days, like herself, in innocence and holiness, we may one day attain the land of beatitude, where in concert with her, we may praise You and bless You forevermore in eternity. Amen.