

Virgin Martyr Febronia (Jun. 25)



Saint Febronia, commemorated on June 25, was born in Mesopotamia around the turn of the Third Century. When she was two years old, she was given to her aunt, an abbess in Assyria, to be raised. While she physically grew to be quite beautiful, her spirit matured even more so, as she proved to be an apt pupil. Her aunt even assigned her to spend days apart from the rest of the nuns. She did nothing but pray and read the Scriptures.

Her example called forth many people to the monastery to learn about the faith and to be baptized. Saint Febronia herself instructed many of them, and her teaching abilities became even more renowned.

However, the Roman emperor Diocletian gave orders to rid the land of Christianity. He sent a number of troops under three commanders, Lysimachus, his uncle Selenus, and Primus. Selenus was infamous for his persecution of Christians. Lysimachus' sympathies lay with the Christians though, as his own mother had died a Christian. When the soldiers approached the monastery, only three nuns remained, including the abbess and Saint Febronia. Lysimachus contemplated how to aid the nuns who had not fled.

Such was not to be, as Selenus received word of his intentions. He seized St. Febronia and imprisoned her in chains. He offered her many rewards and marriage to Lysimachus (who also refused the deal as it would be un-Christian) if she would renounce her faith. Saint Febronia did refuse, and Selenus commenced to torture her in many ways, so severely that even the townspeople urged an end to the spectacle. She eventually was beheaded and buried in the convent. Selenus returned to his quarters, where he suffered a mysterious ailment and died. Lysimachus, Primus, and others were converted and baptized, having witnessed the strength of Saint Febronia's faith in God.

In the year 363, most of her relics were transferred to Constantinople. The others remained in a local church. Her tomb has become a source of miraculous healings.

May we all have the courage and faith to bear witness to God as Saint **Febronia** did!