

# The Holy Virgin-Martyr Cecilia and the Holy Martyrs Valerian and Tiburtius\*

Commemorated on November 22

**T**he Holy Martyr Cecilia, who hailed from Rome, was born into a noble family (whose members were, however, idolaters) and lived in the beginning of the third century.

The Saint had great faith in the true God and was very charitable; she longed for the eternal gladness of the immortal Bridegroom of souls and lived in anticipation of His Second Coming, hymning Him, together with the bodiless Holy Angels, as befits a virgin. For this reason, when her parents forced into marriage with Valerian, an idolater, she revealed to him a mystery: that a Holy Angel zealously protected her virginity and that he, too, would be deemed worthy to behold this Angel if he were cleansed through Holy Baptism.

Valerian was received and Baptized by Bishop Urban, who was in hiding on account of the persecutions, and when he returned to their house, he found the Saint praying together with the radiant Angel, who also crowned them with a crown of glory and incorruption and exhorted them to live a life of continence and grace. Valerian, now changed for the better, asked for the favor that his brother, Tiburtius, also be enlightened, as it so happened shortly thereafter. Tiburtius repented of his past life and received the illumination of Baptism; and he, too, frequently saw Angels.

The Saints used to bury Christian Martyrs, and the brothers Valerian and Tiburtius were arrested for this very reason. They were condemned to death by beheading, and the executioner Maximus, who was deeply impressed by the courage of the Saints and their fearlessness in the face of death, at the time of their martyrdom saw radiant Angels receiving the souls of the Martyrs and leading them in glory to the Heavens. Then he, too, confessed his faith in Christ and was martyred there and then, so that he might obtain the same glory as the Martyrs, which he beheld and desired.

St. Cecilia continued to bury Martyrs, to distribute her property to the poor, and to spread the Word of God. She, too, was soon arrested and horribly tortured. But in fact, her valor, boldness of speech, and miracles resulted in the conversion of four hundred souls to Faith in Christ.

The tyrants placed her in a red-hot cauldron; but because she was preserved unharmed, they decided to behead her. The executioner smote her three times on the neck with a sword without, however, managing to kill her. The Saint, though wounded, lived on for three more days, encouraging the Faithful (who anointed pieces of cloth with the blood of her wounds and used them for miraculous healings), surrendering her chaste and heroic soul to



our Lord, with prayers of thanksgiving on her holy lips, in 230 A.D. She has worked many miracles.

A Church was later erected in her name at the place of her martyrdom, in her house in Rome, and her memory was honored in the catacomb of St. Kallistos. Her tomb was discovered in 817, and when it was opened in 1599, her holy Relics were uncovered—intact and unharmed, in a state of incorruption.

The original Latin text of the martyrdom of St. Cecilia relates that during her wedding, while the melodies of worldly music resounded, the Saint sang hymns of love in her heart to Jesus, her true Bridegroom. Perhaps this is why St. Cecilia is associated with music in the West, where she is considered its Patron Saint.

May the glorious Holy Martyrs Cecilia, Valerian, Tiburtius, and Maximus help and benefit all who invoke them with faith and piety!

\* Source: *Άγιος Κυπριανός*, No. 311 (November-December 2002), pp. 190-191.

