

September 17

F. Holy Martyr Sophia, and Her Three daughters: Faith, Hope and Love



They suffered for Christ in Rome in 137 during the reign of Hadrian. St. Sophia was the widow of a Christian and lived in Rome together with three daughters: twelve year old Faith, ten year old Hope and nine year old Love who were brought up in Christian piety. Seized for torture, the young virgins, being "the quality of piety", prepared by the prayers and admonitions of their mother, "openly with firm love of the Creator", fearlessly confessed their faith in Christ before the Emperor, did not shrink before the severe torments. And before the eyes of their mother all three were transferred to firing on the heated iron lattice, burning in boiling pitch, planing by a sharp iron, nailed to the wheel and beaten by sticks so their wounded bodies broke into pieces. But amidst such tortures they remained alive and finally were beheaded. St. Sophia internally felt sorrow for each of the daughters as their mother and was tormented because she felt their severe tortures. The weight of her suffering was increased even more because she outwardly tried to be calm and encourage her children to be martyrs. She would have been happier to accept a martyr's crown after them. But the cruel torturer, wishing to strengthen even more her internal torment torn by the loss of her children, released her in freedom and allowed her to take the torn bodies of her daughters for burial. St. Sophia "for three days sat praying before the grave of her daughters" and she died here at the grave after these three days. The relics of the holy martyrs are in the Esho Church in Alsace.

Kontakion, tone 1

**The sacred branches of the honorable Sophia,
Faith, Hope and Love, were shown forth.
Through grace they confounded the wisdom of the Greeks.
Having both struggled and shone as bearers of victory,
Christ, the Master of all,
Granted them incorruptible crowns.**

Martyr Agathocleia

She was a slave who was forced by her masters to renounce Christ and worship idols. She underwent various torments for eight years for her firmness in the true faith and, finally, was killed when her brutal mistress struck her with a red hot iron bar.

Martyr Theodota

Born in Cappadocia, she was beheaded after being tortured for her faith in Christ during the reign of Emperor Alexander Severus in 230 in Nicaea.

156 martyrs suffered for Christ in Palestine in 310 during the reign of Emperor Maximian. One of them was burned; the others were beheaded. Among those who suffered were the Egyptian **Bishops Peleus and Nilus, the Presbyter Zeno** and two noblemen **Patermuthius and Elijah**.

Lucia and her son, the Martyr Geminian

St. Lucia died in peace, and St. Geminian was beheaded in Rome in 303 during the reign of Emperor Maximian.

Hieromartyrs Heraclius and Myron, Bishops of Cypriot city of Thomas suffered for their faith in Christ. St. Heraclius was consecrated by the Holy Apostle Barnabas. St. Myron succeeded St. Heraclius.

Constantinople Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos

See April 25. The locally honored Constantinople Icon of the Mother God is found in the Old Rus Cathedral (Novgorod Diocese). The icon by measurement is 2 diuma (2 inches), and was beaten out on a slate board. According to tradition, in ancient times two monks from Constantinople, passing through Old Rus, attended the liturgy in the Cathedral and left this icon there as a memorial. A great many believers streamed to this holy icon and took the water consecrated by immersing the holy icon in it, with the hope of healing sick babies.

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed. 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) pp 0338-9
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