

# Saint Agnes of Rome



Date of birth: 291  
Birthplace: Rome, Italy  
Date of death: Jan 21, 304, *martyred*  
Feast Day: January 21

**Patron Saint of: Young girls, Chastity, Rape survivors, The Children of Mary**

## About Agnes:

Born into a wealthy Christian family, Agnes was reported to be a beautiful young girl. Her hand was highly sought after for marriage, but Agnes knew from a very young age that God did not want her to marry, and instead was insistent on staying a consecrated virgin.

In the year 303, the Emperor Diocletian issued a series of edicts heavily persecuting Christians. One high-ranking young man, the son of Prefect Sempronius, proposed marriage to Agnes in the year 304. He tried to win her over with lavish gifts and money, but young Agnes would not be swayed, merely saying, "I am already promised to the Lord of the Universe. He is more splendid than the sun and the stars, and He has said He will never leave me!" The Prefect's son became irate and told his father about her suspected Christianity and sentenced young Agnes to death.

Agnes was said to have been dragged naked through the streets to a brothel, where men attempted to violate her. Some reports say these men were struck blind when they tried to hurt her. She was tied to a stake to be burned, but the wood reportedly would not light underneath her. Throughout all of these attempts to defile and hurt Agnes, her face shone with joy as she prepared to meet her beloved Jesus. She was finally martyred by sword, and even the pagans wept at the loss of such a young, beautiful girl. Her story was written about in the 4th century by St. Ambrose.

St. Agnes is venerated as a virgin martyr and was canonized pre-congregation. After her death, her foster-sister Emerentiana prayed at her tomb and was subsequently stoned to death. Emerentiana was later canonized. Several miracles are associated with St. Agnes. One such miracle is the miraculous healing of Constantina, daughter of Constantine I, of leprosy after praying in front of the tomb of St. Agnes.

## A word from St. Agnes:

"Christ made my soul beautiful with the jewels of grace and virtue. I belong to Him whom the angels serve."

## Find out more:

**Books:** *The Witness of Early Christian Women: Mothers of the Church* by Mike Aquilina  
**Podcast:** Discerning Hearts Podcast - *St. Agnes, a Lamb for Christ*