

St. Catherine of Alexandria



c. 287–c. 305

Feast Day:

November 25

Catherine was born in the year 287 in Alexandria, Egypt. When she was young, she read and studied as much as she could. She had a vision of Jesus and Mary, and so became a Christian. This was brave because at that time being a Christian was illegal. The penalty was often torture and death!

But Catherine had courage. Since she was the governor's daughter, she could talk to the Roman emperor, Maxentius. She urged the emperor to stop persecuting Christians. The emperor brought 50 people to debate with Catherine. But Catherine was an eloquent speaker. She not only won the debate, but even won more than 200 converts to the Faith, including members of Maxentius's own family. The emperor was furious. He had the new Christians put to death, and threw Catherine in jail.

Even in prison, St. Catherine gave every moment to Christ. Many people came to visit her, including the emperor's wife. Many of these people became Christians after their meetings with Catherine. The emperor had them all killed. When the emperor saw that torture and imprisonment did not stop Catherine from speaking the truth about Jesus Christ, he tried something new. He offered to marry her if she would deny the Catholic Faith. She refused. Catherine told him, "I have become a bride of Christ." So the emperor sentenced Catherine to death. She was 18 years old.

St. Catherine of Alexandria is a great example of courage. She is the patron saint of philosophers, preachers, and young female students.

© SOPHIA INSTITUTE FOR TEACHERS