

## **Monasticism Month**

### **St. Anastasia of Sirmium**

St. Anastasia, also known as Anastasia of Sirmium, is a highly revered Christian mother who exemplifies the monastic vows of chastity and poverty. Born in the late 3rd century in Rome, she came from a noble and wealthy family. Her father was a prominent pagan who held a high position in the Roman Empire while her mother was a devout Christian who secretly nurtured Anastasia's faith from a young age.

When Anastasia came of age, her parents desired for her to get married. She obliged but she maintained her virginity and secretly ministered to the sick/need. When her husband suddenly passed away, she went to a convent and put on the monastic garbs. She became known for her devout asceticism and control over her physical desires. Her diet consisted of only bread with salt, and she only ate this once every other day. During Lent, she only ate twice a week after the sixth-hour prayer on Saturdays and Sundays. She also became known for her ability to heal the sick, earning her the name of the "Deliverer from Potions."

During one of the feasts, Anastasia (along with other sisters) journeyed to a nearby convent to celebrate with them. On the way to the convent, Anastasia saw soldiers torturing and dragging Christians. With great courage, Anastasia spoke up and condemned the soldiers saying, "O you hard-hearted men is this what you do to those whom God created in His own form and image and for whom He gave Himself up?" One of the soldiers seized her and brought her to the governor, before whom she confessed her faith. He tortured her, crucified her, and lit a fire under her, but none of these harmed her. Then, he commanded for her to be beheaded—thus, she received the crown of martyrdom. In Coptic iconography, Saint Anastasia is often depicted holding a cross, a palm (symbol of martyrdom), and a medicine bottle, representing her role as a healer.

Her asceticism, characterized by voluntary poverty and intense personal sacrifice, became a testament to her unwavering faith and her profound commitment to the Christian ideal of selfless love. Let us strive to have a similar mentality to St. Anastasia, denying ourselves worldly pleasures so we may grow closer to our Lord.

#### **Sources:**

- [Coptic Synaxarium](#)