



St. Susanna

August 11

The Holy Martyr Susanna the Virgin was the daughter of Presbyter Gavinius and a niece of Bishop Caius of Rome. She was raised in strict Christian piety and in her youth dedicated herself to God. Her family was related to Emperor Diocletian, who heard the reports of her virtue and beauty.

Having decided to give St. Susanna in marriage to his co-emperor Maximian, Diocletian sent his own relative, the dignitary Claudius, to Susanna's father, Gavinius, and then his own brother Maximus. Both of them, together with the wife of Claudius Prepedigna and her sons, Alexander and Cythius, accepted Baptism after they spoke to the pious family. Having learned that the entire family had been converted to Christianity, Diocletian sent them into exile.

Soon, those who had accepted Baptist were taken and burned at Ostia, not far from Rome, and their ashes were thrown into the sea. They took the holy virgin Susanna to the palace, and the empress publicly tried to persuade her to give herself to Maximian. But the empress, secretly a Christian, supported St. Susanna in her intention to preserve her virginity for the sake of the Lord. She explained to the emperor about the virgin's unwillingness to enter into marriage with a pagan. Diocletian gave permission to Maximian to defile the holy virgin, but an angel defended her.

Macedonius began to urge Susanna to offer sacrifice to the idols. "I offer myself in sacrifice to my Lord," she answered. Macedonius then cut off the martyr's head. The empress secretly buried the body of the saint. The room where the murder occurred was consecrated into a church by Bishop Caius. In 296, the father of St. Susanna, Presbyter Gavinius, accepted a martyr's end, as did St. Caius.¹

¹ www.oca.org