

The governor anticipated no difficulty in making the child offer incense to the gods, and being irritated at the fruitlessness of his persuasions, delivered her into the hands of rude soldiers and an infuriated rabble—loathsome temptations, cruel blows, bitter words, and the most subtle flattery were all powerless to alter her purpose.

The little Agnes unceasingly called upon Jesus to protect her body and soul from their relentless fury, and her cries met a loving response. Exasperated at her courage, the soldiers redoubled their torments and then threw her again into prison.

Another night in dismal confinement, and again, calmly beautiful, Agnes appeared before the judge. A murmur of disapproval could be heard in the crowded room as she entered, attended by a strong guard. Pagan mothers shuddered as they looked upon their dear ones companioned in such a place, and upon such a charge. Christian men and women silently wept and prayed God to grant the dear child continued courage and confidence in His love. The tribunal was determined to break the strong will that upheld her, but Agnes resisted everything, and died for Jesus. As St. Jerome expresses it—she overcame the cruelty of the tyrant and the tenderness of her age, and crowned the glory of chastity with that of martyrdom. When the baptismal waters were being poured upon her head, was it a prophetic vision of her sad but glorious death that suggested to her parents the name of Agnes, whose Greek significance is *chaste*, and its Latin meaning *lamb*?

What a flood of serious thoughts fill the mind as the memory fondly dwells upon the great faith and heroic virtues of this child-martyr. Her great courage reminds one of those words of Cardinal Gibbons: "The Lord would have a woman gentle and good; but He loves a woman to be *valiant* as well. To those qualities add purity and

truthfulness, and we have a woman whose very presence is a continual blessing."

To see those qualities so fully developed in a child of thirteen, shows of what a soul is capable who puts her trust in God. And in St. Agnes, Catholics, especially Catholic girls, have an example which is perfectly possible to imitate. Her temptations and many of her trials were the same as their temptations and trials. She overcame them—do they intend to? In attending any religious exercise outside of her own home, St. Agnes ran great risks. Living in a pagan city, and in a time of savage persecution, she nevertheless kept her soul pure, and firmly guarded her faith. Surely we, who live in peaceful countries, enjoying freedom of worship, can do as much. For two days and nights shocking torments and cruel death stared her in the face, but she looked on them unflinchingly. No one heard her call piteously for a priest to absolve her from her sins. She was always prepared for death, and when God called her, St. Agnes went to Him with confidence and love.

After her execution, friends of St. Agnes reverently buried her sacred remains near the Nomentan Road, a short distance from Rome. During the time of Constantine the Great, a church was built over the spot, and in it her relics repose in a rich silver shrine, the gift of Pope Paul V.

This church and the memory of its lovely namesake are especially honored by the Holy Father, who, accompanied by many ecclesiastical dignitaries, and the students of the Propaganda, pays a solemn visit to this celebrated shrine every year. It is here, too, on the Feast of St. Agnes, Jan. 21, that two white lambs are blessed at high mass by the Abbot of St. Peter's Chains. These lambs are then carried to the Pope, who also blesses them. The Capuchin nuns of St. Lawrence then receive them, and with the wool the nuns

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