



## St. Zoe

### December 18th

St. Zoe is mentioned in the account of St. Sebastian's martyrdom. She was the wife of the jailer Nicostratus, and was unable to speak for six years. She fell down at the feet of St. Sebastian, and by her gestures implored him to heal her. The saint made the Sign of the Cross over the woman, and she immediately began to speak and to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. She said that she had seen an angel holding an open book in which everything St. Sebastian said was written. All those who saw the miracle also came to believe in Christ, the Savior of the world. Nicostratus and his wife asked to be baptized, and St. Sebastian told Nicostratus to

serve Christ rather than the Emperor. He also told him to assemble the prisoners so that those who believed in Christ could be baptized. Nicostratus asked his clerk, Claudius, to send all the prisoners to his house.

St. Sebastian spoke to them of Christ, and became convinced of their desire to be baptized. He summoned the priest Polycarp, who prepared them and told them to fast until their baptism that evening. Claudius informed Nicostratus that the Emperor wanted to know why the prisoners were gathered at his house. Nicostratus told him about the healing of his wife, and Claudius brought his own sick sons, Symphorian and Felix, to St. Sebastian. That evening, Polycarp baptized Nicostratus and all his family, Claudius and his sons, and also sixteen condemned prisoners. The newly-baptized numbered sixty-four in all. Nicostratus, his wife Zoe and brother Castorius, and Claudius and his sons remained in Rome with St. Sebastian, refusing to move to a safer place. Soon it became known that a community of Christians were active in Rome. The pagans arrested St. Zoe first, while she was praying at the grave of the Apostle Peter.

St. Sebastian was also arrested, placed on trial, and found guilty; he was pierced with sharp arrows and beaten with clubs and received a martyr's crown. At her trial, St. Zoe bravely confessed her faith in Christ.

She died, hung by her hair over the foul smoke from a great fire of dung. Her body then was thrown into the River Tiber. Appearing in a vision to St. Sebastian, she told him about her death.

#### **Kontakion, Tone 4**

Thou didst excel in godly zeal/ and gather a band of martyrs from which thou didst shine as a star. The arrows that wounded thy body, O Sebastian,/ pierced the hearts of the enemy. Hence Christ has glorified thee.