

# Cecilia

---

*Saint Name:* St. Cecilia

*Dates:* Late 2<sup>nd</sup> Century

*Location:* Rome

*Feast Day:* November 22

St. Cecilia, born in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD Rome, is the patroness of musicians. The details of her story may be fictional, but her existence and martyrdom are considered a historical fact. Cecilia was born into an extremely rich family and was betrothed at a young age to a youth named Valerian. During her wedding, she was said to have sung her heart to God and before consummating her nuptial, she informed her husband that she had taken a vow of virginity and had an angel to protect her. When her husband asked to see proof of the angel, Cecilia told him he must travel to the third milestone in the Appian Way and be baptized by Pope Urbanus. After his baptism, Valerian returned to Cecilia and found an angel at her side. The angel then crowned Cecilia with a chaplet of rose and lily. After hearing of this, Valerian's brother was also baptized. Together the brothers dedicated their lives to burying the saints who were murdered by the prefect (magistrate) of the city. Both brothers were also executed. Cecilia spent her time preaching and was able to convert over four hundred people to Christianity. Most were baptized by Pope Urban. Cecilia was arrested and condemned to be suffocated by fire. She survived and when Almachius (the prefect) heard of this, he sent an executioner to behead her. The executioner struck her three times with a sword failing to sever her head, so he left her to bleed to death. While she was bleeding she continued to preach to the gathering crowd. She was buried by Pope Urban and his deacons sometime in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD in Sicily. St. Cecilia's body was exhumed in 1599 and her body was found to be incorrupt and it was reported that a "mysterious and delightful flower odor..." was coming from her coffin.



St. Cecilia was not canonized – she was proclaimed a saint by early Christians. Canonization did not begin until the 12<sup>th</sup> century. St. Cecilia's feast is November 22.