

Saint Agnes

21 January



About Saint Agnes (? - 304)

As with so many of the early Roman martyrs, very little is now known about Saint Agnes' life. Since she died at the age of 12, she had hardly begun to live.

Saint Agnes was filled with God's love in her life from a very young age and took a vow of celibacy, which to us may seem strange since she was so young, but with shorter life expectancy back in the 200's, people got married at a very young age.

Agnes was filled with the love of God from an early age, vowed herself to celibacy, and when the opportunity of martyrdom arose, she did not run away but stepped forward and took it.

The name Agnes means lamb and it is a custom that on this day, a lamb is blessed whose wool will be used to make palliums for bishops.

What can we learn from Saint Agnes?

Saint Agnes gave her life for Christ and did so as a martyr. She did not compromise her morals, and she remained faithful to Christ until the end.

Each day in our life we are asked to make choices. Some are of little or no consequence and others can have a lasting impact. When it comes time to making those important decisions, we need to ask ourselves, is the decision I am about to make leading me (and others) to Christ, or is it taking me (and others) in the completely opposite direction to what Christ asks of us. Jesus must be our guide in all the decisions we make. It is in these times we are given an opportunity to be a living witness to Christ and our faith in Him.

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Collect

Almighty ever-living God,
who choose what is weak in the world to confound the strong,
mercifully grant,
that we, who celebrate the heavenly birthday of your Martyr Saint Agnes,
may follow her constancy in the faith.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel

Matthew 13:44-46

He sells everything he owns and buys the field

Jesus said to the crowds:

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found;
he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls;
when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.'

Antiphon

The Lamb who is at the centre of the throne
will lead them to the springs of the waters of life.

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Hymn for the Memorial of Saint Agnes

O Saint Agnes, you decided
you would live for Christ alone,
consecrated as a virgin
and the world's ways to disown.

Called to witness to Christ Jesus,
as a martyr you would die,
shedding your blood for the Saviour
so to reign with Him on high.

O Lord, when we must make choices,
help us choose right, not the wrong.
So like Agnes we will witness
to You, showing our faith strong.

Text: Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono
Tune: Merton 87.87 (CWBII #239)

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