

# Saint Katherine

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## Our Patron Saint, who is commemorated on November 25th

Also spelled as "Saint Catherine". It is proper to spell her name either way.

The Holy Great Martyr Katherine was the daughter of Constus, the governor of Alexandria in Egypt, during the reign of the emperor Maximian (305-313). Living in the capital, Katherine received a most splendid education, having studied the works of the finest philosophers and teachers. Young men from the most worthy families of the empire sought the hand of the beautiful Katherine, but none of them was chosen. She declared to her parents that she would only enter into marriage with someone who surpassed her in reputation, wealth, beauty and wisdom.

Katherine's mother, a secret Christian, sent her for advice to her own spiritual father -- a saintly elder pursuing prayerful deeds in solitude in a cave not far from the city. Having listened to Katherine, the elder said that he knew of a youth, who surpassed her in everything, such that "His beauty was more radiant than the shining of the sun, His wisdom governed all creation, His riches were spread throughout all the world ". The image of the Christ produced in the soul of the holy maiden an ardent desire to see Him. In parting, the elder handed Katherine an icon of the Mother of God with the God-Child Jesus on Her arm and bid her to pray with faith to Mary to show her a vision of Her Son.

Katherine prayed all night and was able to see the Most Holy Virgin who told Her Divine Son to look upon the kneeling of Katherine before Them. But the Child turned His face away from her saying that He was not able to look at her because she was ugly, of shabby lineage, beggarly and mindless like every person -- not washed with the waters of holy Baptism and not sealed with the seal of the Holy Spirit. Katherine returned again to the elder deeply saddened. He lovingly received her, instructed her in the faith of Christ, admonished her to preserve her purity and integrity and to pray unceasingly; he then performed over her the sacrament of holy Baptism. And again Saint Katherine had a vision of the Most Holy Mother of God with Her Child. Now the Lord looked tenderly at her and gave her a ring -- a wondrous gift of the Heavenly Bridegroom.

At this time the emperor Maximian was himself in Alexandria for a pagan feast day. Because of this, the feast was especially splendid and crowded. The cries of the sacrificial animals, the smoke and the smell of the sacrifices, the endless blazing of fires, and the bustling crowds at the arenas filled Alexandria. Human victims also were brought -- because they chose to die in the fire rather than deny Christ under torture. The Saint's love for the Christian martyrs and her fervent desire to lighten their fate impelled Katherine to go to the emperor-persecutor Maximian.

Introducing herself, the saint confessed her Christian faith and with wisdom denounced the errors of the pagans. The beauty of the maiden captivated the emperor. In order to convince her and show the superiority of pagan wisdom, the emperor gave orders to gather 50 of the most learned men of the empire, but the Saint got the better of the wise men, such that they themselves came to believe in Christ. Saint Katherine shielded them with the sign of the cross, and they bravely accepted death for

Christ and were burnt by order of the emperor.

Maximian, no longer hoping to convince the saint, tried to entice her with the promise of riches and fame. Having received an angry refusal, the emperor gave orders to subject the saint to terrible tortures and then throw her in prison. The Empress Augusta, who had heard much about Katherine, wanted to see her. Having succeeded in convincing the military-commander Porphyry to accompany her with a detachment of soldiers, Augusta went to the prison. The strong spirit of Saint Katherine, whose face glowed with Divine grace, impressed the empress. The holy martyr explained the teachings of the Christians to the people and they believed and were converted to Christ.

On the following day they again brought her to the judgment court where, under the threat of being tortured on a wheel of spikes and nails, they urged that she recant from the Christian faith and offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. The saint steadfastly confessed Christ and she herself approached the wheel; but an Angel smashed the sharp tools, which broke up into pieces that hit pagans who were passing by. Having beheld this wonder, the empress Augusta and the imperial courtier Porphyry with 200 soldiers confessed their faith in Christ in front of everyone, and they were beheaded. Maximian again tried to entice Saint Katherine, proposing marriage to her, and again he received a refusal. She confessed her fidelity to the Heavenly Bridegroom Christ, and with a prayer to Him she herself put her head on the block under the sword of the executioner and was beheaded.

**Source:** [http://www.antiochian.org/saint\\_katherine](http://www.antiochian.org/saint_katherine)

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### **Pictures of Icons of Saint Katherine (Catherine)**

