

Holy Martyr St. Photina (Svetlana) the Samaritan woman, her sons Victor, called Photinus, and Josiah; and the sisters of the Holy Martyr: Anatolia , Phota, Photida, Paraskeva, Kiriake, Domnina; and the martyr Sebastian

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The Holy Martyr St. Photina was the very same Samaritan woman with whom the Lord spoke at Jacob's Well (see [John 4:5-42](#)). During the reign of Emperor Nero (54-68), who showed extraordinary cruelty in opposing Christianity, St. Photina lived in Carthage with her little son Josiah, and fearlessly preached the Gospel. Her older son Victor bravely fought with the Roman forces against the barbarians, and for his service was appointed military leader for the city of Attalia (Asia Minor).



Sebastian, Attalia's city administrator, said to St. Victor upon meeting him, "I have reliable information that you, your mother, and your brother, are followers of the teachings of Christ. However, I will give you some friendly advice: submit yourself to the emperor's will, and you will then get the property belonging to the Christians you turn over to us. I will write to your mother and brother, warning them not to openly preach Christ. Let them confess their faith in secret." St. Victor answered, "I want to be a preacher of Christianity, just like my mother and brother." To this, Sebastian responded, "O Victor, we all well know what travails await you, your mother, and your brother, as a result." Immediately after saying those words, Sebastian felt a sharp pain in his eyes; his expression changed, and he was struck dumb.



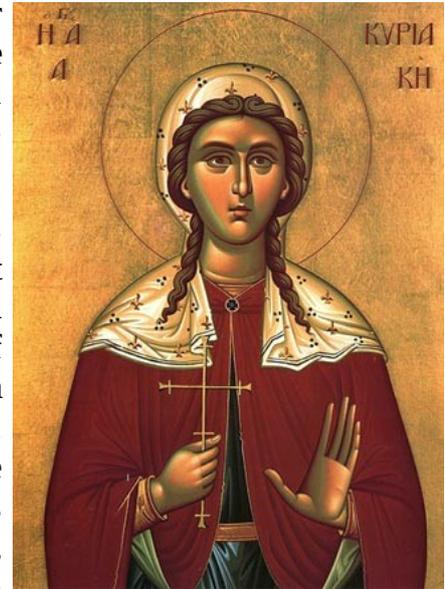
For three days, he lay blind and unable to speak a single word. On the fourth day, he suddenly loudly exclaimed, "Only the Christian faith is true; there is no other true faith!" Finding St. Victor standing near him, Sebastian said, "Christ is summoning me." Soon thereafter, he was baptized, and immediately regained his sight. Witnessing that miracle, St. Sebastian's servants followed their lord's example

Rumors of what had transpired reached Nero, and he ordered that the Christians be brought to him in Rome for trial. Then the Lord Himself appeared to the confessors and said, "I will be with you, and Nero will be defeated, together with all those who serve him." To St. Victor, he announced, "From this day forth, your name will be Photinus, Radiant, for many whom you illumine, will turn to Me." The Lord bolstered St. Sebastian with the words, "Blessed is he who pursues his ascetic struggle to the end." St. Photina, whom the Savior told of the coming sufferings, went, accompanied by several other Christians, from Carthage to Rome, to join the confessors.

In Rome, the emperor ordered the saints to be brought before him, and asked them whether they truly believed in Christ. All of the confessors firmly refused to renounce the Savior. Then the emperor ordered that the martyrs' wrists be crushed on an anvil. However, while

the confessors were being tortured, they felt no pain, and the Martyr Photina's hands remained unharmed. Nero ordered Saints Sebastian, Photinus, and Josiah to be blinded and locked up in a dungeon, and St. Photina and her sisters Anastasia, Phota, Photida, Paraskeva and Kyriake to be sent to the imperial palace, into the custody of Nero's daughter Domnina. However, St. Photina turned Domnina and all of her servants to Christ, and they all received Holy Baptism. She also converted to the Christian Faith a sorcerer who had been sent to bring poisoned drinks intended to kill the confessors.

Three years went by, and Nero sent for one of his incarcerated servants. Messengers reported to him that Saints Sebastian, Photinus, and Josiah, who had been blinded, were completely well, and that a constant stream of visitors was coming to listen to them preach. The prison itself had turned into a bright and sweet-smelling place, where God was being glorified. Then Nero ordered that the saints be crucified, upside down, and that for three days their naked flesh be beaten with belts. On the fourth day, the emperor sent servants to see whether the martyrs were still alive. However, immediately upon arriving at the place of torture, the servants went blind. At the same time, an Angel of the Lord freed and healed the martyrs. The saints took pity on the blinded servants, and through their prayers to the Lord returned their sight to them. Regaining their sight, the servants believed on Christ, and soon thereafter were baptized.



In impotent rage, Nero ordered that St. Photina be flayed and her body thrown into a well. The Martyrs Sebastian, Photinus, and Josiah had their legs severed below the knee, their limbs thrown to the dogs, and then they also were flayed. St. Photina's sisters also had to endure terrible torments. Nero ordered that their breasts be cut off, and then that they be flayed. Trained in cruelties, the emperor prepared a most cruel death for St. Photida: He ordered that her legs be tied to the tops of two trees that had been bent to the ground; when they were released, the martyr was torn asunder. He ordered the others to be beheaded. St. Photina was pulled out of the well and incarcerated for 20 days.

Thereafter, Nero summoned her to him, and asked if she would now submit to his will and offer sacrifice to the idols. St. Photina spat in the emperor's face, and laughing at him said, "Most impious, blind, lost mad man! Can you possibly think me so stupid that I would agree to renounce my Lord Christ and offer sacrifice to idols as blind as you?!"

On hearing those words, Nero once again ordered that the martyr be thrown into the well, where she gave up her soul to the Lord (+66 AD).

Icons of St. Photina, St. Sebastian and St. Kyriake fm www.pravoslavie.ru

Source: http://www.stjohndc.org/Russian/saints/e_0904_photina.htm