



St. Corona, pray for us!



Who was St. Corona?

The Roman Martyrology records St. Corona's feast day under the 14th of May, saying: "In Syria, the holy martyrs Victor and Corona, under Emperor Antoninus [Marcus Aurelius]. Victor was subjected to diverse and horrible torments by the judge Sebastian. Just then, as Corona, the wife of a certain soldier, proclaimed him blessed for his constancy in his sufferings, she saw two crowns falling from heaven, one for Victor, the other for herself. She related this to all present, and was torn to pieces between two trees, while Victor was beheaded."

St. Corona is believed to have lived in a Roman province of Syria. In the year 177 A.D., during the reign of Emperor Aurelius, the Roman Empire was dealing with multiple problems, among them the deadly Antonine Plague, for which popular opinion blamed the Christians, leading to great persecutions ordered by Sebastian, a Roman governor. Among those persecuted was St. Victor, a Roman soldier.

Upon discovering Victor was a Christian, other soldiers brought him to face judgement before Sebastian. Sebastian was known for despising Christians. Wanting to make an example out of Victor, Sebastian ordered Victor to be bound to a pillar and whipped until his skin fell from his body. After the whipping, Sebastian ordered Victor's eyes to be gouged out. No matter the amount of pain Victor endured, he never denied the Lord.

News about Victor's cruel treatment reached Corona, a young girl only sixteen years old. Corona is believed to have been the wife of one of the soldiers, and a Christian herself, though she kept her faith a secret. Upon hearing about Victor, Corona decided she needed to do something to help the dying man. She publicly announced her own Christianity and rushed to Victor's side. She knelt next to him and prayed, letting him know he was not alone.

Not much time passed before Corona was brought before Sebastian, too, to face her own punishment. Sebastian could not believe Corona's actions. He immediately ordered her to be imprisoned and tortured. Corona was tied to the tops of two palm trees that had been bent down to the ground. At Sebastian's command, the ropes holding the trees down were cut and the trees sprang away from each other and back to their upright position. The force was so strong that Corona's body was ripped in half. As a final command, Sebastian ordered Victor to be beheaded.

In the small town of Anzù, in Northern Italy, there is a basilica, where St. Corona's relics may still remain. Most probably, though, they were taken to Aachen in Germany in about 1000. Even today she is especially venerated in Austria and Bavaria.

Traditionally, St. Corona, among other things, is the Patroness against epidemics. The prayer to St. Corona to ward off plagues is an English translation of a German prayer used long ago, during a time when the people of Austria and Bavaria endured difficult times much like our own.

Mary, salvation of the sick, pray for us!

St. Corona, pray for us!

