



Saint Agnes

Feast day January 21

St. Agnes, also called Saint Agnes of Rome, virgin and patron saint of girls, is one of the most-celebrated Roman martyrs. According to tradition, Agnes was a beautiful girl, about 12 or 13 years old, who refused marriage, stating that she could have no spouse but Jesus Christ. Her suitors revealed her Christianity, which was then condemned as a cult, and in punishment she was exposed in a brothel. Awed by her purity and presence, all but one of the Roman youths left her untouched; in his attempt to violate her, the sole attacker was miraculously struck blind, whereupon Agnes healed him with prayer. Later, after refusing to renounce her faith, she was murdered during the persecution of the Christians by the Roman emperor Diocletian and was buried beside the Via Nomentana. On her feast day two lambs are blessed in the Church of Sant'Agnese in Rome, and from their wool are made the pallia sent by the pope to archbishops as tokens of jurisdiction.

Britannica.com (This article was most recently revised and updated by Melissa Petruzzello, Assistant Editor.)