

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

THE HOLY MARTYR SEBASTIANA

In the early church, many women distinguished themselves by bravely refusing to renounce their belief in Christ despite the threat of persecution, torture and death. One such person was the Holy Martyr Sebastiana. Sebastiana was a follower of St. Paul receiving her Christian training from this famous Apostle to the Gentiles. Several years after Paul's own martyrdom, another period of persecution against Christians was unleashed by the Emperor Dometian. Sebastiana was arrested and brought before the governor in the city of Marcianopolis to answer for her "crime" of professing her faith in Jesus Christ.

Given the opportunity to forsake her Savior, Sebastiana remained steadfast in her convictions. She was subjected to barbaric tortures -- she was even thrown into a red-hot oven. Miraculously, she was unharmed! Sebastiana was then taken to the city of Heraklea, where additional punishment was ordered. Amazingly, nothing seemed to harm her. Finally, Sebastiana suffered martyrdom by beheading. Pompian, the governor of that region, ordered her body to be tossed into the sea. According to a tradition of the Church, her earthly remains were recovered by angels, who took her sacred body to the island of Rhodes for burial.

The Holy Martyr Sebastiana is a shining example for all of us. We, too, must be willing to Sacrifice everything – even our very lives – for our beloved Lord, Jesus Christ.