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GREAT MARTYR EUPHEMIA

A TIME TO OBEY AND A TIME TO RESIST

The story of the *GREAT MARTYR EUPHEMIA* is a story of CHOICES. She was born in Chalcedon in the third century – a time when Christians were still facing terrible persecution from the pagan Romans. Her parents were wealthy aristocrats but secretly devout Christians. They did their best to foster a love for the Lord within their daughter. Euphemia could have lived a life of luxury and still practiced her christian faith quietly. Instead, she chose to vocally express here beliefs, even though she understood that by speaking out, she would face danger.

Euphemia’s faith was put ot the ultimate test when the provinical governor Priscus came to Chalcedon to celebrate a pagan festival. Some 49 Christians, led by Euphemia, refused to attend. When the angry Priscus discovered this insubordination, he had them brought befor him and demanded to know why they had disobeyed his imperial command. Without hesitation, Euphemia spoke up: *“Both the Emperior’s commands and yours must be obeyed if they are not contary to the God of heaven. If they are, not only must they not be obeyed, that must be resisted.”*

Furious with this defiant response, Priscus ordered the dissenters to all be tortured for 19 days. Euphemia was the target of the most brutal cruelties. First, she was tied to a wheel. Then she was thrown into a fiery furnace. Surviving these ordeals, Euphemia was thrown into a pit filled with poisonous snakes. After making the sign of the Cross, she remained unharmed! Finally, St. Euphemia suffered martyrdom after being severely mauled by wild beasts. Her remains rest in the famous church of St. George in Constantinople.