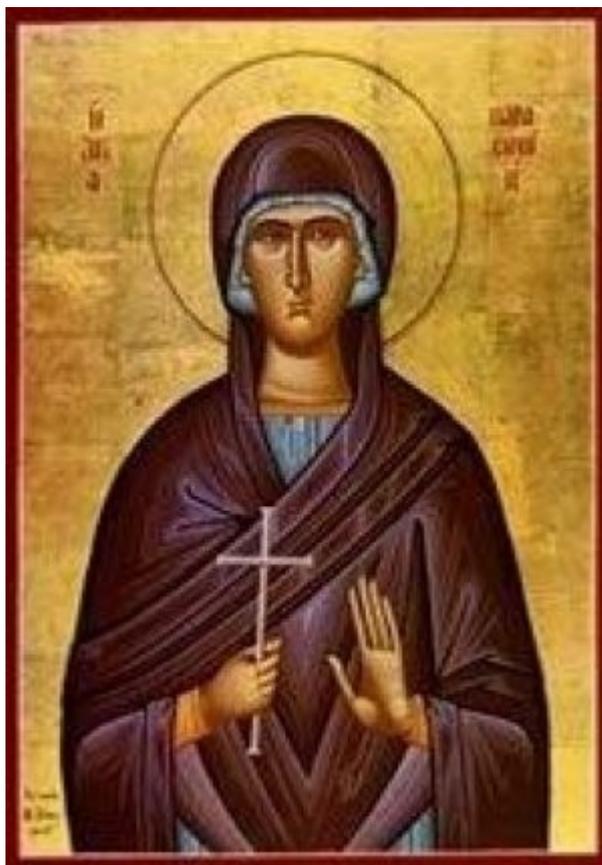


# Saint Paraskevi - Ayia Paraskevi

Healer of the Eyes and Eye of the Soul



## **Saint Paraskevi**

Saint Paraskevi, who was from a certain village near Rome, was born to pious parents, Agatho and Politia. Since she was born on a Friday (in Greek, Paraskevi), she was given this name, which means "preparation" or "preparedness" (compare Matt. 27:62, Mark 15:42, Luke 23:54,

and John 19:31, where 'Friday' is called "the day of the preparation"). From childhood she was instructed in the sacred letters and devoted herself to the study of the divine Scriptures, while leading a monastic life and guiding many to the Faith of Christ. During the reign of the Emperor Antoninus Pius, she was apprehended because she was a Christian and was urged to worship the idols, but she answered with the words of Jeremias: "Let the gods that have not made heaven and the earth perish from off the earth" (Jer. 10:11). Because of this she endured exceedingly painful torments, and was beheaded in the year 140. The faithful pray to her for the healing of eye ailments.

**Apolytikion in the First Tone**

Appropriate to your calling, O Champion Paraskevi, you worshipped with the readiness your name bears. For an abode you obtained faith, which is your namesake. Wherefore, you pour forth healing and intercede for our souls.

**Kontakion in the Plagal of the Fourth Tone**

O most majestic One, we have discovered your temple to be a spiritual clinic wherein all the faithful resoundingly honor you, O famed and venerable martyr Paraskevi.

[http://www.stparaskevi.org/about-us/patron\\_saint](http://www.stparaskevi.org/about-us/patron_saint)

## Saint Paraskevi

<https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2015/07/saint-paraskevi-resource-page.html>

### 7 Astonishing Miracles of Saint Paraskevi

<https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2010/07/st.html>

### The Wondrous Saint Paraskevi

<https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/2013/07/the-wondrous-saint-paraskevi.html>

<http://www.daimonologia.org/2016/07/saint-paraskevi-and-dragon.html>

# Saint Paraskevi

Saint Paraskevi was born in Rome (circa 130 A.D.) during the reign of the pagan Emperor Adrian. Her parents, Agathon and Politia, were devout Christians even though at the time, belief in Christ was a crime against the state punishable by death. Agathon and Politia, who were of nobility, likewise ignored the disdain of their peers by championing the cause of the down trodden. They were fervent Christians who prayed earnestly for a child, promising to God that they would raise the child in a God fearing manner. They were blessed late in life with a daughter, they named Paraskevi, because she was born on a Friday (Paraskevi in Greek).

Keeping their promise to God, Agathon and Politia were vigilant in exposing Paraskevi to the fullness of Christianity. The task was made considerably easier because the young girl had a natural penchant for learning. With the help of private tutors, Paraskevi became an ardent student of both Holy Scriptures and secular learning. However, the greatest influence in her life, according to her own testimony, was the Christ-like example of her parents.

Young Paraskevi developed into a cultured, sensitive and beautiful woman. It wasn't long before some of the noblemen began to take notice of her, and to seek her hand in marriage. Paraskevi always managed, however, to find some excuse to politely refuse. Because inwardly she was convinced that she was destined for a more sublime mission in life.

Paraskevi was orphaned of both parents when she was twenty years old. At this point in her life, that inner feeling, that she was destined for a higher calling, had crystallized into love and zeal for Christ. Her greatest desire was to become an apostle for Christ. To achieve her goal, Paraskevi distributed all her inheritance among the poor of Rome; entered a convent and was tonsured a nun. At the convent, Paraskevi distinguished herself in humility, love and spiritual fortitude.

When she finally became proficient in prayer and sacrifice, the Abbess granted her leave so that she could fulfill her life's ambition; to preach the love of God to all men. This was truly a precarious mission, because the pagan Roman Empire was extremely hostile toward Christianity. Even the most courageous of Christians were reluctant to openly admit that they were followers of Christ. Nevertheless, this did not daunt Paraskevi, nor did it dampen her zeal. As a matter of fact, she began her preaching mission right in Rome! The fervor of her kerygma, and the example of her commitment were such an inspiration, that great multitudes were converted on their very first encounter with the Saint. In spite of her great fame and legacy, Paraskevi managed to elude the authorities. Heartened by this, she decided to extend her ministry to Turkey.

It was in Turkey where Paraskevi experienced her first encounter with the law. One day, as she was preaching just beyond present day Istanbul, in the village of Therapia, the soldiers of Emperor Antonius Pius arrested her. The charge against the young missionary was that the blasphemous words which she uttered were the cause of all the ills that had recently befallen the empire.

At her trial, the Emperor, infatuated by her beauty, begged Paraskevi to renounce Christ and worship the idols of Rome. To entice her further, Antonius Pius offered to take her as his wife, and to give her half of his empire. Paraskevi's reply was quick and resolute: "I have made my choice; no amount of wealth or deprivation can separate me from my love for Christ." Rebuffed and infuriated, Antonius Pius ordered that Paraskevi be imprisoned and beaten mercilessly until she died. The soldiers were astounded to discover that no matter what punishment and torture she received one day, the next morning she would be as refreshed and carefree as if nothing had happened.

Fearing the wrath of the Emperor, the soldiers decided to report this strange phenomenon to him. Castigating the ineptness of his soldiers, Antonius Pius shouted another form of execution. This time he ordered the soldiers to take Paraskevi out to the spot where she was arrested and to prepare a cauldron of boiling water, tar and oil. He further stated that it would be his pleasure to personally supervise the scalding of that "blasphemous Paraskevi".

When Paraskevi was finally thrown into the boiling cauldron, she reacted as if the water were delightfully lukewarm. In utter disbelief, Antonius again began castigating the soldiers. Softly and with a loving smile, Paraskevi reassured the Emperor that his soldiers had executed his command faithfully. She also stated, "My Lord and Master wills that I continue His work". Utterly enraged and oblivious of her words, Antonius yelled, "Sprinkle me with the oil and tar. I don't believe what I see!" Obliging, Paraskevi scooped some of the boiling mixture in her hands, and splashed it on the Emperor's face.

Antonius squealed with pain and began yelling, "I'm blind! I can't see!" Instinctively, he began imploring the Saint to have mercy and pity on him. "Restore my eyesight, and I shall believe", he begged. "Your God is surely the true God!" Accepting his latter statement as a confession of faith, Paraskevi jumped out of the cauldron; rushed to a spring of water that was nearby, and scooped up fresh cool water onto Antonius' face, invoked the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and sealed his eyes with the sign of the Precious and Life-saving Cross and the Emperor's eyesight was restored immediately!

The miracle had such a profound effect on Antonius that he not only freed Paraskevi, he ordered that all persecutions against Christians be stopped and he himself was baptized in the name of the Holy Trinity. Thus, Paraskevi resumed her apostolic mission with greater zeal and faith. The calm, however, did not last long. Marcus Aurelius, Antonius' successor, renewed the persecutions against the Christian Church. Paraskevi was beheaded in Rome on the 26th of July, in the year 180 A.D.

*Portions of the preceding text are from "The Synaxarion: The Lives of the Saints of the Orthodox Church" by Hieromonk Makarios of Simonos Petra, and translated from the French by Christopher Hookway*

[http://www.saintbarbara.org/our\\_faith/iconography/saint\\_paraskevi](http://www.saintbarbara.org/our_faith/iconography/saint_paraskevi)

# Paraskevi



Holy Virgin-Martyr St. Paraskevi

The holy and glorious [Virgin-Martyr Saint Paraskevi](#) (also *Paraskeva*) was arrested during the reign of the Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius (r. A.D. 138-161) under the penalty of refusing to worship idols and adhering to the state pagan religion. After enduring many tortures, she was eventually released by the emperor, continuing to profess [Christ](#). She was eventually tortured and beheaded by the Roman governor Tarasius in the year 180. The Church commemorates her on [July 26](#).

# Life

Saint Paraskevi, The Parthenomartyr, (July 26th), was born in a village near Rome during the reign of Hadrian (117-138 AD). Her parents were the pious [Christians](#) Agathonikos (Agathon) and Politea. Her parents prayed fervently for a child, and [God](#) finally blessed their piety. They gave great honor to Friday, the day of Our Lord's suffering. Being born on this day, her parents named her Paraskevi ("Friday" in Greek, but literally "preparation").

St Paraskevi obtained an excellent education from both secular and Scriptural instructors. She was also very knowledgeable in the field of philosophy. Bolstered by her Christian upbringing, she often conversed with other women about Christianity, trying to strengthen their faith in this new religion. Many distinguished families wanted this beautiful, educated and rich woman to marry their sons. Her understanding and kindness made her even more desirable. However having a higher goal in life, St Paraskevi rejected any marriage proposals.

When she was 20 years old, both her parents died leaving her as the sole heir to the family fortune. St Paraskevi did not use her fortune for herself. Filled with the spirit of Christ and Christian ideals, she sold all her worldly possessions using the money to relieve human suffering. There was a portion retained to a community treasury that supported a home for reverent virgins who stayed in a kenobion, a type of commune like a contemporary monastery. These women prayed and fasted doing charitable works. They preached primarily to Hebrew and idol worshiping women giving them an opportunity to learn about Christian salvation.

She left Rome at the age of 30 and began her holy [mission](#), passing through many cities and villages. St Paraskevi's activities occurred during a period that the Jews and Romans persecuted the Christian religion with the greatest intensity. Antoninus Pius (138-161) ruled Rome at this time, and he did not execute Christians without a trial. She was not caught immediately or put to death. Instead, Antoninus protected Christians against the blind mania of the Jewish and Roman inhabitants. Christians could only be brought to trial if another citizen lodged a formal complaint against them. Antoninus however had to repeal this law because of the many disasters which had befallen Rome and which were blamed on the Christians.

Strong in faith, learning, and eloquence, Paraskevi spoke persuasively to her fellow Roman citizens, leading them from idolatry to faith in Christ. Eventually, Antoninus heard of St. Paraskevi's holy [mission](#). Upon her return to Rome, several Jews filed complaints about her and Antoninus summoned her to his palace to question her. Attracted by her beauty and humility he tried with kind words to make her denounce her faith, even promising to marry her and make her an empress. Angered by her refusal he had a steel helmet, lined with nails and compressed on her head with a vice. It had no effect on the Saint and many who witnessed this miracle converted to Christianity. Thrown into prison, Paraskevi asked God to give her the strength to face the terror that awaited her. Antoninus again continued her torture by having her hung by her hair and at the same time burning her hands and arms with torches. The Saint suffered greatly, but had the will not to submit to the pain. Antoninus then prepared a large cauldron of oil and tar, boiled the mixture and then had Paraskevi immersed in it. Miraculously she stood in it as if she being refreshed rather than burned. Angered, Antoninus thought that she was using witchery to keep the contents cooled. Antoninus

then approached the cauldron only to be blinded by the hot steam and searing emissions coming from the area. At this moment the mighty emperor asked for the intervention of St Paraskevi to heal him from this affliction to which she responded:

“Emperor, the Christian God is healing you from the blindness that was given to you as a punishment”.

Immediately, he regained his sight. Humbled by the miracle he freed the Saint, allowing her to continue her [missionary](#) activity and ended all persecutions against the Christians throughout the Roman Empire.

From this episode it is clear to the Christians that St Paraskevi has the intercessional ability to help people with visual ailments.

Astonished by the miracle, Antoninus released Paraskevi. He also ceased persecuting Christians throughout the Roman Empire.

This period was brief. After Antoninus' death in 161, a plague broke out throughout the empire. Romans took it as a sign from their gods that they were angered by the tolerance of Christianity. Under Antoninus' successor, Marcus Aurelius (161-180), the laws dealing with "non-believers" were changed and the persecutions against the Christians resumed.

Despite these dangers, Paraskevi persevered in her [missionary](#) endeavors, spreading the [Gospel](#) wherever she traveled. By authority of emperor Aurelius the provincial eparchs Asclepius and Tarasios captured St Paraskevi. Having refused Asclepius' demands to sacrifice to pagan gods, she was thrown into a snake pit. The Saint made the [Sign of the Cross](#) over the serpent and the serpent perished. Asclepius had heard of the Saint's previous miracles, realized that a great and mighty power guarded Paraskevi and decided to set her free while Asclepius and his court were all converted.

Tarasios however was less tolerant. St Paraskevi was tied and beaten and afterwards imprisoned and a huge rock placed on her chest. She prayed to Christ to help her be strong. The next morning Paraskevi was taken willingly to the Temple of Apollo. Everyone praised Tarasios, thinking that he had succeeded in breaking St Paraskevi's faith. However, upon entering the temple, the Saint raised her hand and made the sign of the cross. Suddenly, a loud noise was heard and all the idols in the temple were destroyed. The priests and idolaters dragged her from the altar, beat her, and pushed her out of the temple. The priests demanded that Tarasios kill Paraskevi. She was convicted and condemned to death by beheading.

It was customary to give the condemned their last wish. She asked to be left alone for a few moments so that she might pray for the last time. Afterwards, the roman soldiers returned and executed the Saint.

Many healing miracles occurred as a result of St Paraskevi's divine intervention. It is said that that merely coming in contact with the dirt of her grave faithful, crippled could walk, demonized would return to health and that the infertile would bear children. Most importantly St Paraskevi healed the blindness of the roman emperor Antoninus Pius while she was in a heated cauldron. Her merciful disposition to her tormentor has made her an intercessor Saint for the healing of eye ailments.

Her remains were eventually taken to [Constantinople](#), where they are venerated by the faithful to this very day.

Appropriate to your calling, O Champion Paraskevi, you worshipped with the readiness your name bears. For an abode you obtained faith, which is your namesake. Wherefore, you pour forth healing and intercede for our souls.

O most majestic One, we have discovered your temple to be a spiritual clinic wherein all the faithful resoundingly honor you, O famed and venerable martyr Paraskevi.

## **Tomb in Pounta, Greece**

According to the tradition of the people of Epirus, Paraskevi was not martyred in Rome as mentioned in her traditional hagiography, but in Thesprotia where the Monastery of Saint Paraskevi of Pounta stands today. According to this tradition, strongly held by the locals, the headless body of the saint was entombed here and her tomb is still venerated today.

It is said that the persecutors of St. Paraskevi dragged her to the edge of the river Acheron to behead her. As the sword was raised over her head, she grabbed a stone pillar that she held so tightly that the print of her hands melted into it leaving an indelible mark. A church was eventually erected here by the faithful in her honor and housed her holy relics. Her skull was eventually placed in the walls of the church, though today it is kept in Moni Petraki in Athens.

According to the author and novelist Spyros Mouselimis, in his article "The Monastery of Pountas and the Feast of Saint Paraskevi" (Ηπειρωτική Εστία, 10, pp. 638-641, 1961), Pountas Monastery was known for its healing waters and numerous miracles. The pilgrims would cut off portions of the stone pillar of St. Paraskevi as a talisman, to the point that in 1960 the size of the stone was half its original size.

The property of the Monastery at one time was very great. According to Lambridis, at the end of the 19th century the annual revenue of the Monastery was 20,000 piastres, from which a boarding school was supported on its premises until 1913. After the population exchange of 1923 the Monastery was abandoned and did not operate again until 1975. Only the eastern side of the original Holy Altar area of the Katholikon survives today, while the rest of the church was restored in 1989 together with the inscription for the tomb of St. Paraskevi.

Today the Monastery operates as a female convent.

<https://orthodoxwiki.org/Paraskevi>

# Veneration



Venerated as the healer of the blind, Saint Paraskevi is often depicted with two eyeballs in her hands.[8]

Saint Paraskevi is the most prominent among women healing saints, and she is widely venerated as the healer of the blind.[8] For this reason, she is often depicted with two eyeballs in her hands.[8]

Her remains were eventually taken to [Constantinople](#).<sup>[1]</sup> Though it is not certain when or how her relics reached Constantinople, it seems that they were exhibited there ca. 1200 so as to be accessible to pilgrims.<sup>[9]</sup>

Saint Paraskevi is commemorated on July 26 by the Church.<sup>[1][2][3]</sup> Her celebration is preceded by a Matins service and is celebrated with the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom, held on the morning of the feast.<sup>[10]</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paraskevi\\_of\\_Rome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paraskevi_of_Rome)

# St Paraskevi

Memory celebrated July 26th



St Paraskevi was born in Rome about 140 AD of Greek Christian parents. Her father, Agathon was rich and her mother, Politia, had many attributes, the greatest of which was her charitability. Agathon and Politia had been married for many years but they were childless. They prayed to God to bless them with a child which they would raise in a true Christian atmosphere. Their prayers were answered with the birth of a girl and because she was born on the sixth day of the week, they named her Paraskevi, the Greek word for Friday.

What impressed Paraskevi the most was not her parents' guidance, but the Christian life which they led. Thus, she knew from a young age, the way of life she would one day lead. She obtained her education from secular

books and from the Scriptures. She was also very knowledgeable in the field of philosophy.

Bolstered by her Christian upbringing and philosophy, she often conversed with other women about Christianity, trying to strengthen their faith in this new religion.

Many noblemen wanted to marry this beautiful, educated and rich woman. Her understanding and kindness made her even more desirable, but having a higher goal in life, Paraskevi rejected any marriage proposals.

When she was 20 years old, both her parents died. Filled with the spirit of Christ and Christian ideals, she sold all her worldly goods and dispersed most of her money among the poor. The remainder was contributed to a community treasury which supported a home for young virgins and widows who had dedicated their lives to the teachings of Christianity. These women had, however, strayed far from the word of the Gospel and, therefore, Paraskevi remained in this home for many years and taught them the true meaning of Christianity.

This was not enough for her, however, and unprotected she went out to teach the way of Christ, knowing that death was waiting for her at the end of her journey. It was during this period that the Jews and Romans persecuted the new religion with the greatest intensity.

She left Rome at the age of 30 and began her holy mission, passing through many cities and villages. She was not caught immediately and put to death because Antonius Pius ruled Rome at this time, and he did not execute Christians without a trial. Instead, he protected them against the blind mania of the Jewish and Roman inhabitants. A Christian could only be brought to trial if a formal complaint were lodged against him by another citizen. However, at one time Antonius had to repeal this law because of the many disasters which had befallen Rome, and which were blamed on the Christians.

Eventually, Antonius heard of St. Paraskevi's holy mission. Upon her return to Rome, several Jews filed complaints about her and Antonius summoned her to his palace to question her. Attracted by her beauty and humility he tried with kind words to make her denounce her faith, even promising to marry her and make her an empress. Angered by her refusal he had a steel helmet, which fitted tightly around her head, lined with nails and placed on her head. It had no effect on the Saint and

many who witnessed this miracle converted to Christianity. Hearing of this, Antonius had them put to death.

Thrown into prison, Paraskevi asked God to give her the strength to face the terror which awaited her. Antonius again continued the torture by having her hung by her hair and her hands and arms burned with torches. The Saint suffered greatly, but had the will not to submit to the pain. Antonius then prepared a large kettle of oil and tar, boiled the mixture and then had Paraskevi immersed in it. Miraculously she stood as if she were being cooled rather than burned. Angered, Antonius thought that she was using magic to keep the contents cool, but the Saint told him that he could test it. She took some of the boiling liquid and threw it in the Emperor's face. It burned his eyes and blinded him. She stepped out of the kettle and went to Antonius, telling him that only the Christian God could cure him. Immediately, he regained his sight and humbled by the miracle he freed the Saint and ended all persecutions against the Christians throughout the Roman Empire.

Free now, Paraskevi went forth with greater zeal to accomplish her apostolic mission. As long as Antonius was alive she taught without fear, however the Emperor died at which time Marcus Aurelius came to power. During his reign a pestilence befell Rome and many people died. Once again the Christians were blamed. The Emperor was forced to change the laws dealing with "non-believers".

Paraskevi was captured in a city which was ruled by a man called Asclapius. Refusing to sacrifice to the pagan gods, she was thrown into a pit with a large snake. The Saint made the sign of the cross and the snake did not harm her. Asclapius, realising that a great and mighty power guarded Paraskevi, she was again set free to teach others about Christianity.

She soon arrived at the city in which she would meet her death. Taracius was the ruler here, and he summoned her to the palace for trial. As Antonius, he also ordered his soldiers to prepare a kettle filled with boiling oil and melted tar and the Saint was placed in it. Once again, nothing happened, and many of the onlookers converted to Christianity. Paraskevi was then tied and beaten and afterwards imprisoned and a huge rock placed on her chest. She prayed to Christ to help her be strong.

The next morning Paraskevi was taken willingly to the Temple of Apollo. Everyone praised Taracius, thinking that he had succeeded in breaking Paraskevi's faith. However, upon entering the temple, the Saint raised her hand and made the sign of the cross. Suddenly, a loud noise was heard and all the idols in the temple were destroyed. The priests and idolaters dragged her from the altar, beat her, and pushed her out of the temple. The priests demanded that Taracius kill Paraskevi. She was convicted and condemned to death.

When the Saint was taken out of the city to be beheaded, she asked to be left alone for a few moments so that she might pray for the last time. Afterwards, the soldiers returned and executed the Saint.

St. Paraskevi is considered to be a healer of the blind, because of the miracle she performed in restoring the sight of Antonius Pius.

## **Apolytikion:**

First Tone

Appropriate to your calling, O Champion Paraskevi, you worshipped with the readiness your name bears. For an abode you obtained faith, which is your namesake. Wherefore, you pour forth healing and intercede for our souls.

## **Kontakion:**

Plagal of the Fourth Tone

O most majestic One, we have discovered your temple to be a spiritual clinic wherein all the faithful resoundingly honor you, O famed and venerable martyr Paraskevi.

<http://www.orthodoxchristian.info/pages/Paraskevi.htm>

**Nous**, (Greek: “mind” or “intellect”) in [philosophy](#), the faculty of [intellectual apprehension](#) and of intuitive [thought](#).

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/nous>