

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Felicula

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: June 13

IN BRIEF

Saint Felicula

Roman virgin and martyr, companion of Saint Petronilla according to tradition.

Feast day	June 13
Born	Rome
Died	date unknown, perhaps 4th century, Rome
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	4th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Felicula for Faithfulness and Freedom of Heart

Novena to Saint Felicula

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Felicula

Saint Felicula is a virgin and martyr of Rome, honored since ancient times on the Via Ardeatina, south of the city. A tradition recorded in the 6th century makes her the companion of Saint Petronilla: having refused to marry a pagan nobleman and to deny Christ, she is said to have been imprisoned, deprived of food, and then put to death. Her story is poorly known, but her cult is ancient. Her feast day is June 13.

Who was Saint Felicula?

We know few things for certain about Felicula. The Roman Martyrology mentions her on June 13, "at the seventh milestone" of the Via Ardeatina, that is, about six miles from Rome, where she was venerated. She was therefore most likely a genuine martyr, buried along this road. Historians tend to place her in the 4th century. The detailed account of her death comes from a later, romanticized text, the *Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilleus*, which places her much earlier, at the end of the 1st century. So this account should be read as a pious tradition rather than a biography.

Key dates

- **Late 1st century, according to legend**: Companion of Saint Petronilla in Rome.
- **According to legend**: After Petronilla's death, she refuses to marry the nobleman Flaccus and to sacrifice to idols; she is imprisoned without food, then put to death.
- **Probably 4th century**: The period of her martyrdom according to historians.

- **After her death**: Her body is buried on the Via Ardeatina, at the seventh milestone from Rome; tradition credits Saint Nicomedes with her burial.
- **6th century**: The *Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilleus*, which tell her story, are written.
- **c. 592**: Pope Saint Gregory the Great sends some of her relics to John, bishop of Ravenna.

The companion of Petronilla

According to the *Acts of Saints Nereus and Achilleus*, Felicula was the foster sister and companion of Saint Petronilla, a young Christian woman of Rome whom tradition linked to the apostle Peter. A Roman nobleman named Flaccus asked for Petronilla's hand in marriage. Consecrated to God, she refused. He gave her three days to decide. Petronilla spent them fasting and praying, and died peacefully on the third day.

Flaccus then turned to Felicula. He gave her a choice: marry him, or sacrifice to the gods. Felicula refused both. She answered that she belonged to Christ and wanted neither a pagan husband nor idols.

The martyrdom

The story goes on to say that Felicula was then locked in a dungeon, without food or water, for several days. Since she would not give in, she was tortured and then thrown into a sewer, where she died. A priest, Saint Nicomedes, recovered her body and buried it on the Via Ardeatina. According to the same tradition, Nicomedes soon paid for this act of charity with his life.

These details belong to the genre of martyrdom stories, which aim to edify more than to inform. Yet they say something true: many young Christian women of antiquity refused to deny their faith or to accept a marriage forced on them, and some paid for it with their lives.

Devotion and relics

Felicula is listed in the Roman Martyrology on June 13. Her cult is ancient: around 592, Pope Saint Gregory the Great entrusted some of her relics to John, bishop of Ravenna. Her memory is closely tied to that of Saint Petronilla, whose story she shares. She is shown as a young virgin martyr with the palm, sometimes beside Petronilla.

Why pray to Saint Felicula?

Felicula is a witness to an inner freedom that nothing can force. She refused a forced marriage and refused to deny Christ, even at the cost of her life. Her story stands with that of all women whom others try to push into a marriage or a renunciation. You can pray to her for girls threatened with forced marriage, for Christians under pressure, and for all who want to stay true to their conscience.

To pray with her, you can use the prayer to Saint Felicula or the novena to Saint Felicula.

Where to pray to Saint Felicula

- **Rome**: the Via Ardeatina, south of the city, along which she was buried, the same road as the Catacombs of Domitilla.
- **Rome**: Saint Peter's Basilica, where the altar of Saint Petronilla recalls the memory of her companion.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Felicula for Faithfulness and Freedom of Heart

Saint Felicula is a Roman virgin and martyr, honored since ancient times on the Via Ardeatina. According to a 6th-century tradition, she was the companion of Saint Petronilla, refused to marry a pagan nobleman or to sacrifice to idols, and was put to death for her faithfulness to Christ. This prayer is an original composition inspired by her story, not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to her all who face coercion and all who want to stay faithful.

Prayer to Saint Felicula

Saint Felicula,
companion of Petronilla,
you had given your heart to Christ
and refused to take it back.
Neither promises nor threats
could make you deny your Lord.

In hunger, darkness and suffering,
you remained free,
for your life was hidden in God.

Pray for girls whom others try to force into marriage,
for Christians pressed to deny their faith,
for all who face pressure against their conscience.
Give us a free and faithful heart,
one that neither sells itself nor takes itself back,
and the joy of belonging to Christ.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Felicula

- On her feast day, June 13.
- For a girl threatened with forced marriage.
- For Christians who are persecuted or under pressure because of their faith.
- For consecrated people, and for those discerning a vocation.
- When you must stay true to your conscience despite pressure.

A prayer of faithfulness

You can close with this short prayer:

Lord Jesus, I belong to you.
Keep me faithful, today and always.
Saint Felicula, pray for us. Amen.

To prepare for her feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Felicula from June 5 to June 13, and read the life of Saint Felicula.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Felicula

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the story of Saint Felicula, Roman virgin and martyr, companion of Saint Petronilla according to tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on her feast day, June 13, begin on June 5. It is suited to asking for faithfulness to Christ and to praying for those under pressure, and you can pray it at any time of the year.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the Sign of the Cross and present your intention to God. Read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. End with: "Saint Felicula, pray for us." The small act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A young Christian of Rome

Felicula lived in Rome, in a city where Christians were still a minority and often viewed with suspicion. Her faith could not be taken for granted. She had chosen it.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the gift of faith. Help me to choose it every day.

Today: Renew your baptismal promises by saying the Creed.

Day 2: Friendship with Petronilla

Felicula was Petronilla's companion. The two young women supported each other in the faith. A Christian friendship helps us stay faithful.

Prayer: Lord, give me friends who help me follow you, and make me faithful to them.

Today: Pray for a friend who supports you in your faith.

Day 3: A heart given

Felicula had given her heart to Christ. Every Christian life, consecrated or married, begins with this gift of the heart to the Lord.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, I give you my heart. Keep it for yourself.

Today: Spend some time in adoration or silent prayer.

Day 4: Grief

Petronilla died, and Felicula was left alone. She knew the pain of losing a friend. God does not abandon us in our grief.

Prayer: Lord, comfort those who have lost a friend or a loved one.

Today: Pray for a friend who has died.

Day 5: Refusing coercion

Flaccus wanted to force Felicula to marry him. She refused. Marriage is a free gift, and no one can be forced to love.

Prayer: Lord, protect girls threatened with forced marriage. Give them courage and help.

Today: Learn about an organization that helps victims of forced marriage.

Day 6: Refusing idols

Felicula also refused to sacrifice to the gods. Our idols wear other faces: money, appearance, power. Christ alone deserves our worship.

Prayer: Lord, free me from the idols that take your place.

Today: Give up, for today, something that takes up too much room in your life.

Day 7: Hunger and prison

Felicula was locked up without food. In her prison she kept her peace. Whoever belongs to Christ remains free, even in chains.

Prayer: Lord, sustain those imprisoned for their faith. Give them your peace.

Today: Fast from one meal in solidarity with those who are hungry.

Day 8: The martyrdom

Felicula gave her life rather than deny Christ. Her body was thrown into a sewer, but a priest came to recover it. God forgets none of his children.

Prayer: Lord, welcome all who die for their faith. Give me the courage to stay faithful to you.

Today: Pray for Christians who are persecuted today.

Day 9: The memory of the Church

Since ancient times the Church has honored Felicula on the Via Ardeatina, and Pope Gregory the Great shared her relics. The martyrs remain alive in the memory of the Church.

Prayer: Lord, through the intercession of Saint Felicula, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Today: Give thanks for a witness of faith who has made a mark on your life.

Living the novena with Saint Felicula

The story of Saint Felicula has come down to us through a legendary account, but it touches a present-day reality. Even today, girls are married against their will, and Christians are pressed to deny their faith. During these nine days, you can carry them in your prayer. You can also ask for yourself the gift of inner freedom: the freedom to say yes to Christ and no to whatever draws you away from him.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Felicula,*
> *faithful virgin and martyr of Christ,*
> *present to the Lord the intention I have carried during these nine days.*
> *Obtain strength and help for those whom others try to coerce,*
> *perseverance for persecuted Christians,*
> *and for me a free heart that belongs to God alone.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

You can also pray the prayer to Saint Felicula at any time, and read the life of Saint Felicula.

CREDITS

Credits and sources

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