BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Quinta of Alexandria

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: February 8

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IN BRIEF

Saint Quinta of Alexandria

Christian of Alexandria put to death by the mob in 249 for refusing to worship the idols.

Feast day	February 8
Born	3rd century (date unknown)
Died	249, Alexandria (Egypt)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	3rd century

In this booklet

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Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Quinta of Alexandria

Saint Quinta (also called Cointha) was a martyr of Alexandria, in Egypt, who died in 249. An ordinary Christian, she refused to worship idols during an anti-Christian riot shortly before the persecution of Emperor Decius, and was put to death by the mob. Her martyrdom is reported by a first-hand witness, Bishop Saint Dionysius of Alexandria. Her feast day is February 8.

Who was Saint Quinta?

Of Saint Quinta we know almost nothing except her death. But what we do know is solid: the account comes from a letter by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria at the time of the events, addressed to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, and copied by the historian Eusebius of Caesarea into his *Ecclesiastical History*. It is one of the most direct testimonies we have about the martyrs of the 3rd century. Dionysius says nothing of Quinta's age, family or occupation; he presents her only as "a believing woman". Her greatness lies entirely in her refusal to deny Christ.

Key dates in the life of Quinta

- **3rd century**: Quinta lives in Alexandria, a great city of Roman Egypt, within a large and active Church.
- **Early 249**: A pagan soothsayer and poet stirs up the crowd of Alexandria against the Christians; the violence lasts about six months.
- **249**: An old Christian man, Metras, is the first victim of the riot.
- **249**: Quinta is taken by force to a temple, refuses to worship the idols, and is then dragged through the city, scourged and put to death.
- **Shortly after**: The virgin Apollonia and other Christians of Alexandria in turn suffer martyrdom.

- **Late 249 and 250**: Emperor Decius orders all the inhabitants of the Empire to sacrifice to the gods; the persecution becomes general.
- **c. 251**: Bishop Dionysius recounts these events in a letter to Fabius of Antioch.
- **Early 4th century**: Eusebius of Caesarea copies this account into his *Ecclesiastical History*.

The riot of Alexandria

In the middle of the 3rd century, Alexandria was one of the largest cities of the Roman Empire, and its Christian community was large. At the beginning of the year 249, Dionysius tells us, a man who called himself a soothsayer and poet stirred up the pagan crowd against the Christians. This was not yet a persecution ordered by the emperor: it was popular violence, which lasted about six months and came a year before the imperial edict.

The first victim was an old man named Metras. When he refused to blaspheme Christ, the mob beat him, wounded him cruelly and stoned him outside the city. Then it turned on a Christian woman: Quinta.

The martyrdom of Quinta

According to the account of Dionysius, handed down by Eusebius, Quinta was taken by force into a temple of the idols, and they tried to make her bow down. She turned away in disgust. They then tied her feet and dragged her through the whole city over the rough paving stones; she was scourged and dashed against millstones, then taken to the same place as Metras, where she was put to death.

The blood of the first martyrs, Dionysius adds, did not calm the crowd: the rioters fell upon the houses of the Christians, plundered them and killed others. Among them was the virgin Apollonia, whose martyrdom is told in the

same letter. Many Christians of Alexandria, the bishop reports, accepted the loss of their goods with joy.

Cult and art

Saint Quinta is honored by the Catholic Church as a martyr, with a feast on February 8. She is also venerated by the Orthodox Churches. No particular shrine keeps her memory today, but she belongs to the great family of the martyrs of Alexandria, alongside Saint Metras and Saint Apollonia. Artists show her as a young woman being stoned, scourged, or tied by the feet and dragged behind a horse, in memory of the torment described by Dionysius.

What can we learn from Saint Quinta?

Saint Quinta was neither a bishop, nor a nun, nor a famous figure: she was an ordinary Christian, of whom history has kept only one gesture. Before the idols, she turned away. This refusal, which cost her her life, reminds us that faithfulness to Christ is often decided in a simple, decisive choice. You can pray to her for persecuted Christians, for those who suffer the violence of a crowd or a group, and for the courage not to deny your faith under pressure.

To pray with her, see the prayer to Saint Quinta and the novena to Saint Quinta.

Where to pray to Saint Quinta

- **On February 8**, in any church, in union with the Church that keeps her memory.
- **Alexandria** (Egypt): the city of her martyrdom, where a Christian community still lives.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Quinta for Persecuted Christians

Saint Quinta, a Christian of Alexandria, refused in 249 to worship the idols and was put to death by a raging mob, as Bishop Saint Dionysius of Alexandria reports. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to her persecuted Christians and those who must stay faithful under pressure.

Prayer to Saint Quinta

Saint Quinta,
humble believer of Alexandria,
before the idols you turned away,
for your heart belonged to Christ alone.
Help me to recognize and refuse
the idols that want to take his place in my life.

You who were dragged, beaten and humiliated
without denying your Lord,
support all who suffer for their faith,
and those whom the crowd crushes and rejects.

Obtain for me the courage of faithfulness
in small and great trials,
and the peace of those who know they are loved by God.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Quinta

- On her feast day, February 8.
- For persecuted Christians, especially in Egypt and the Middle East.
- When you face group pressure to act against your conscience.
- For victims of collective violence and harassment.

A short invocation

> *Saint Quinta, faithful martyr,*
> *pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for her feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Quinta from January 31 to February 8, and read the life of Saint Quinta.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Quinta of Alexandria

Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is inspired by the martyrdom of Saint Quinta, a Christian of Alexandria put to death in 249, as told by Bishop Saint Dionysius of Alexandria. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on her feast day, February 8, begin on January 31. You can also pray it at any other time of the year.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the Sign of the Cross and entrust 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 Quinta, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A believer among others

Dionysius calls Quinta simply "a believing woman". In the eyes of the world she is nothing extraordinary, but she belongs entirely to Christ.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to live my faith in the simplicity of each day.

Act of the day: Say a prayer at the beginning and at the end of the day.

Day 2: A Church in the city

Quinta lived in Alexandria, within a large Christian community. Her faith was carried by a whole Church.

Prayer: Lord, bless my parish and make us a living and fraternal community.

Act of the day: Greet or meet someone from your parish whom you hardly know.

Day 3: When the mob is unleashed

A soothsayer stirred up the crowd against the Christians. Hatred spreads quickly when everyone follows the others without thinking.

Prayer: Lord, keep me from following the crowd when it turns on an innocent person.

Act of the day: Refuse to pass on a rumor or a mockery.

Day 4: The witness of Metras

Before Quinta, the old man Metras refused to blaspheme and died by stoning. His courage went before and supported hers.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the elders who showed me the path of faithfulness.

Act of the day: Visit or call an elderly person.

Day 5: Before the idols

Taken by force to the temple, Quinta refused to bow down before the idols. She turned away: her heart was for God alone.

Prayer: Lord, show me the idols of my life, money, pride, appearances, and help me turn away from them.

Act of the day: Give up today something that takes up too much room in your life.

Day 6: Dragged through the city

They tied Quinta's feet and dragged her through Alexandria. Like Christ carrying his cross, she was exposed to the gaze of all.

Prayer: Jesus, you who were humiliated on the way to Calvary, support those who are humiliated today.

Act of the day: Pray the Stations of the Cross, or meditate on one station.

Day 7: Struck without denying

Quinta was scourged and bruised, but she did not deny her Lord. Suffering did not take her away from him.

Prayer: Lord, in my sufferings, keep me united to you.

Act of the day: Offer a pain or a difficulty to God, in union with the Passion of Christ.

Day 8: The gift of her life

Quinta was put to death at the same place as Metras. Her life, given out of love, joins that of Christ who died and rose again.

Prayer: Lord, support the Christians who risk their lives for their faith, in Egypt and throughout the world.

Act of the day: Support a charity that helps persecuted Christians.

Day 9: A memory across the centuries

Bishop Dionysius recounted her death, Eusebius handed it down, and the Church still keeps her memory. A single act of faithfulness can light up generations.

Prayer: Lord, make my life a witness for those who will come after me. Through the intercession of Saint Quinta, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass if you can, and pray for the martyrs of today.

Closing prayer

Saint Quinta,
martyr of Alexandria,
you turned away from the idols to remain with Christ.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Give me a free and faithful heart,
and the strength never to deny my Lord.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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