

Lives of Saints

Ss Perpetua and Felicity

d. 203

Feastday: 7th March



“Stand fast in
the faith and
love one
another.”

St Perpetua

I (Perpetua) made the decision to become a Christian in the year 203, even though I knew it could mean my death during Septimus' persecution. I was then 22 years old, married and with a baby son whom I was still nursing.

My father tried to talk me out of my decision, but I stood fast. I was arrested with four other catechumens including two slaves Felicity and Revocatus, and Saturninus and Secundulus. Our catechist, Saturus, had already been imprisoned before us. I was baptized before we were led away to prison.

The prison was crowded, the heat was suffocating, and we were badly mistreated by the soldiers. It was terrifying, but the most excruciating pain came from being separated from my baby. Felicity was even worse off, because she suffered the stifling heat, overcrowding, and rough handling while being eight months pregnant.

We were later transferred to a better part of the prison. There we could have visitors, and I could see my baby. My father and the judge who was examining me tried to change my mind, but I did not give in.

Meanwhile Felicity was also in torment. It was against the law for pregnant women to be executed. Felicity gave birth to a healthy girl two days before the execution. The child was later adopted and raised by one of the Christian women of Carthage.

Secundulus died in prison. The rest of us were sentenced to be thrown to the wild beasts in the arena. Having been wounded by the wild animals, we were then put to the sword, and our bodies interred in Carthage.

