



## *Pastor's Column*

*St. Peter Catholic Church*

*July 29, 2018, Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

### *Saint Philomena: Prayer Warrior, Miracle Worker*

We take a short break from our summer series on various apologetics matters and turn our attention this week to St. Philomena. A beautiful statue of her has just been donated to the parish, and we have set her up in the corner of the narthex where our Prayer Boards are set up.

Sadly, very little is known about the life of St. Philomena. It is believed that she was a Greek princess who pledged her virginity to Jesus Christ and was martyred for it age 13. But she was still unknown in Christendom by and large until the remains of a young woman were discovered in the year 1802 at the Catacombs of Santa Priscilla with three tiles reading: "Peace be to you, Philomena."

All that is known about her life comes from a Neapolitan nun's vision; Sister Maria Luisa di Gesu has reported that St. Philomena had appeared to her and told her she was the daughter of a Greek king who converted to Christianity. When Philomena was 13-years-old, she took a vow of consecrated virginity. After her father took his family to Rome to make peace, Emperor Diocletian fell in love with Philomena, but she refused to marry him and was consequently subjected to torture.

She was scourged, drowned with an anchor attached to her, and shot with arrows. But each time she was attacked, angels ministered to her and healed her through prayer. Finally, the emperor had Philomena decapitated. According to the story, her death came on a Friday at three o'clock in the afternoon – the same day and time as the death Jesus.

Two anchors, three arrows, a palm symbol of martyrdom, and a flower were found on the tiles in the young woman's tomb in 1802, and they are interpreted as symbols of her martyrdom.

Ever since the discovery of her tomb, she has been credited with countless intercessions and miracles. Her intercession is sought by people of all ages, cultures, and social standings around the world. Martyred at age 13, she willingly traded her earthly life for heavenly glory and continues her work today by promoting the virtues of chastity and sanctity among youth and bringing the faithful closer to the Blessed Virgin Mary and to Jesus Christ above all. It would seem that she was held in quiet reserve by God for nearly seventeen centuries and summoned at a time when there has been a great deal of uncertainty and an epidemic absence of faith. Her very name contains the words: *filia luminis* ("daughter of light"). She is an enlightener of a dark and corrupt age, toiling to confound all of the howling anthems of materialism, secularism, and anti-Christian sentiments. She is a virgin, a martyr, and a wonder worker. For all of this, she has been recruited by our parish to be a particular intercessor for all of our prayers and intentions, hence why a statue of her has been donated to the parish and why her statue has been set up in our Narthex Prayer Corner where we have our Prayer Boards sets up and our Letters to God table available.

Saint Philomena...pray for us.