

# *The cult of St. Agatha*



# *The history and martyrdom*

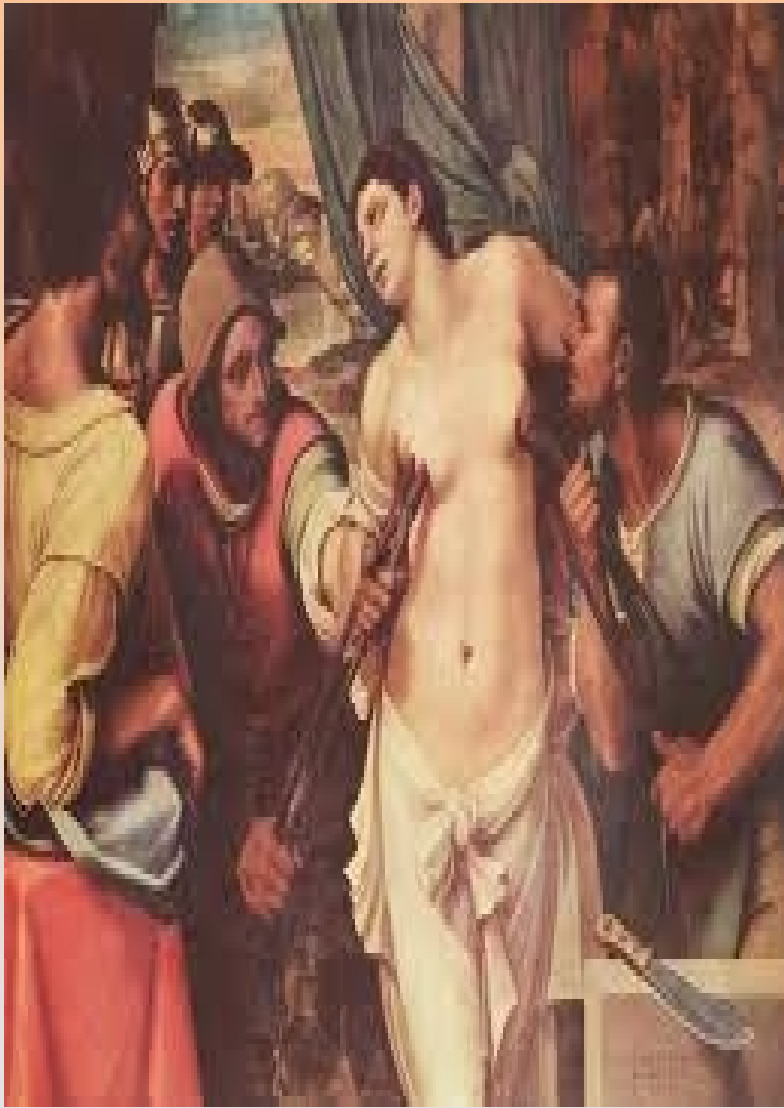


*Born in Catania  
dominated by the  
Romans in the third  
century AD*

*The birthplace in Lapi di  
way today Biscari way*

*Of family noble and  
of rare beauty, was  
consecrated to God  
by wearing the red  
veil of consecration*





*These were the years of Christian persecution and Agata did not escape this fate.*

*In fact, the Proconsul Quinziano summoned notice to recant their God.*

*At the same time, however, fascinated by the beauty of the girl decided to want at all costs.*

*But Agatha resisted in every way, even after several martyrs including the mutilation of the breasts.*

*It was then that the first miracle happened, in fact, the next night the cell Agatha was visited by St. Peter reassured her and healed her wounds.*

*Some days after the Proconsul, seeing the girl healed, was infuriated so much to order that she was put on hot coals.*

*Li took the second miracle. While the body of the young woman burned, the red veil of consecration remained intact.*



*Agatha died  
February 5, 251 A.D. .*

*After his death there was a great  
earthquake in the city and it was  
then that his body was taken to  
locals in revolt, in the church of St.  
Gaetano Caves.*



*It is said that Quinziano terrified  
flee from Catania being  
murdered by the river Simeto.*



# The places Agatha



*Even today, walking through the streets of Catania, you have the opportunity to visit the places where St. Agatha was martyred and those closely related to the worship and the celebration of the patron saint of the city.*

*The Birthplace of St.  
Agatha in Via Biscari,  
behind the Cathedral*







*The church of St. Agatha to prison, where the saint was imprisoned during the trial and martyrdom. A few steps from Stesicoro Place.*



*The cell*

*The church of St. Agatha to the Furnace (the current St. Biagio) where the girl was put on hot coals. It is located in Stesicoro Place, just below the prison St. Agatha*





*St. Gaetano Caves. The place where Agatha was buried immediately after his death.*

*It is located near Stesicoro Place in the current Carlo Alberto Place ("a fera" for the people of Catania)*



*The St. Agatha Vetere,  
first cathedral of Catania.  
Here is preserved the  
sarcophagus where you  
think it was contained to  
the Holy.  
It is located behind the  
prison St. Agatha.*





*The fountain of St. Agatha built in memory of the transportation of the body of the Holy by the Byzantine general Maniace in Constantinople in 1040. It is located near Uzeda Port the face of so-called Navy Arc.*



*The remains of Saint  
returned in their city, for  
about two soldiers  
Byzantine: Gisilberto and  
Goselmo.  
The two in 1126 stole  
dismembering the body of  
Agatha.  
They were welcomed by  
Bishop Maurice and to  
locals who, given the late  
hour, they went to the  
house with the white  
nightshirts. That is why  
today the devotees to  
Saint wearing a white  
habit.*





*The Cathedral of St. Agatha, built for the first time in 1091. The present structure dates back to 1711 to Vaccarini.*

*Inside the Cathedral, in the chapel of St. Agatha there's room, which houses the Reliquary Bust and Treasure Chest containing the relics.*





# *The party between religion and folklore*



*The reliquary bust, so called, because inside there are some relics of the Holy (the skull and rib cage). It is completely covered with gold and silver precious donated over the years by various devotees including famous rulers.*

*The chest is a silver case Gothic containing the relics of St. Agatha.*



*Inside the box we find the remains of the body of the saint, which as mentioned before, when it was brought from Constantinople to Catania was dismembered.*



# *The veil*



*The red veil of consecration to God, that is not burned along with the body of the saint. Since then, is worshiped by devotees and several times was carried in procession in order to save the city from the lava of Etna. It is kept in a glass case.*

# *The “Fercolo”*



*The “Fercolo” to locals called “A Vara”, is a small temple of solid silver. It weighs 17 tons which increase up to 30 during the festivities. Serves to carry through the streets the Reliquary Bust and Treasure Chest.*

*Is pulled by devotees through two cordons about 100 meters long. At the head of each of them are connected four handles.*



# *The “Candelore”*



*During the procession, the “Fercolo” driven by two cords, is preceded by 12 “Candelore” or waxy votive, carried on the shoulders on average eight bearers. Each provides religious congregations, craft associations and city neighborhoods.*

# *Typical sweets*



*During the celebrations on the streets of Catania is not uncommon to see the stalls of sweet specialties characteristics, including olivette green St. Agatha (marzipan paste), the breasts St. Agatha (cassata of ricotta) and nougat almonds and orange zest.*

# *The days of celebration*

*The festival begins at noon the first Sunday in January, when 12 fireworks detonated the Duomo, opening the celebrations. The festivities continue then with religious meetings, cultural and sports, the “Candelore” cross the city roads with their bands until February 3, when the morning finished their rounds, will take part in the procession offer wax all the Associations of St. Agatha and the Church authorities, civil and military.*

*On the evening in Duomo Place held a musical show by the theater Bellini with music Composer Catanese and soon after there is a fireworks display: the so-called "A Sira o tri".*

*The party continues with the fourth round of the external “Fercolo” and 5 with the internal one.*

*The February 12 is celebrated the eighth of St. Agatha while August 17 is celebrated St. Agatha mid-August to commemorate the homecoming of the body of the patron saint of the city of Constantinople.*

*It must be said, however, that for us people of Catania every day is good to remember our “Santuzza”, although sometimes someone uses expressions a bit “colorful”.*

*But we look forward to putting the Dawn of 4 February and the return of Santa in his bedroom on the morning of 6 to shout:*

*“Citizens St. Agatha hurray”*