January 22

Damiana (4th cent.) nun and martyr

At the beginning of the fourth century, in the Egyptian province of Parallos north of the Nile delta, the monastic superior Damiana was decapitated along with the forty women of her community.

The daughter of a local governor named Mark, Damiana was brought up in her father's faith. At the age of fifteen she decided to dedicate herself totally to prayer and the meditation of Scripture, and asked her father for permission to move with several friends to a place where they could live the monastic life. Mark, who was a very generous man, had a well-protected monastery built for them.

When persecution broke out under the emperor Diocletian, Mark was one of the first asked to deny his faith because of his civic responsibilities. He did so, but Damiana, who was courageous and resolute, convinced her father to repudiate his act of apostasy. Mark went to confess his faith publicly and was decapitated.

Word reached the emperor of the role Damiana and her sisters had played in what had happened, and he tried unsuccessfully to make Damiana deny her faith. All of the women were martyred, and at the site of their martyrdom a women's monastery named after them still exists today.

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:
Vincent of Saragossa (d. 304), deacon, first martyr in Spain

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
Vincent, deacon and martyr

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (13 tubah/terr):
Wedding at Cana of Galilee

LUTHERANS:
Vincent, martyr in Spain

MARONITES:
Timothy, apostle and martyr
Anastasius the Persian (d. 628), monk and martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Timothy, apostle
Anastasius the Persian, martyr
Philip the Thaumaturge (d. 1569), metropolitan of Moscow (Russian Church)

OLD CATHOLICS:
Vincent, martyr