February 5th: Memorial of Saint Agatha, Virgin and Martyr

Gospel text (*Lk* 9:23-26): Jesus said to all, “If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it…"

Saint Agatha, virgin and martyr (3rd century)

Fr. Jesús VEGA Mesa
(San Antonio Abad de Tamaraceite, Spain)

Today, we celebrate the memory of St. Agatha, a virgin probably martyred during the Decian persecution. The Christian people must be always willing to offer their life for Christ. This is how St. Agatha, the saint born in Sicily in the 3rd Century, perceived it. It was not possible to conform her total love for Jesus with the Roman prefect's amorous advances that were trying to force her to break her promise of virginity. Agatha, a young Christian girl, received the most terrible and cruel death threats.

When they arrested her for being a Christian, they first tried to convince her to make sacrifices to the gods. When not accomplishing that, they forced her to prostitute herself as a punishment. But she had already drunk from the Gospel fountain: “For if you choose to save your life, you will lose it” (Lk 9:24). And she begged the Lord for His strength in order not to fail Him.

—As St. Agatha did, we are also to pray with the Psalm: «Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings from the violence of the wicked» (Ps 17:8-9).