

Reflection Wednesday Week 33 St Cecilia 2023

Devotion to St Cecilia, in whose honour a basilica was constructed in Rome in the fifth century, has spread far and wide because of the *Passion of Saint Cecilia*, which holds her up as a perfect example of a Christian woman, who embraced virginity and suffered martyrdom for the love of Christ.

Nothing much is known about Cecilia except her existence and her name; with the additional complication that so many stories have grown up round her that any remaining historical facts are obscured. No-one knows quite why she should suddenly have become popular in the middle of the sixth century, some 200 years after her death, and her association with music is also a mystery. It may be real, or it may come from the description in the *Passion* of Cecilia singing to God "in her heart" while the musicians were playing on her wedding day, or it may come from a linguistic confusion: where the *Passion* describes her being stifled to death *candentibus organis*, "with the pipes glowing red-hot," this could have been misread as *cantantibus organis*, "with the organ playing."

It would be good to see in Cecilia one who represents the thousands of women who have given themselves to God and made sacrifices for the faith to show their deep love for God but of whom little or nothing is known. She helps us to see our lives as a song, a melody with all its ups and downs, high notes and low notes, and the successes as well as the failures of life. It is a melody that contributes in no small way to the great symphony of creation and is a sign of God's creative genius.

How to describe a gentleman? Someone who knows how to play the accordion, but doesn't.

Two jazz guitarists meet in a bar, and one says, "Yeah man, I bought your last album, it was awesome!" to which the other replies, "Oh so that was you!"