

Servant Women, Disciples of St. Paul



Importance

Elaborate on

- Elaborate on the value and role of women in the early church

Understand

- Understand St. Paul's view on the ministry of women in church

Emphasize

- Emphasize the lives of early female saints



St. Phoebe

- *"I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also" (Rom 16:1,2).*



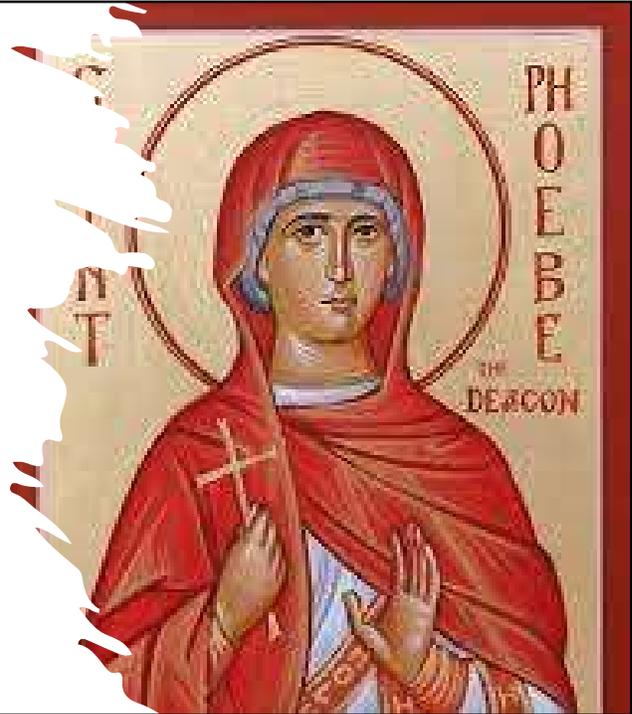
St. Phoebe: Background

- Phoebe means 'bright, radiant or shining'.
- From the port city of Cenchrea, the eastern seaport of the city of Corinth.
- Phoebe is the only Christian woman's name recorded at that place.
- Delivered St. Paul epistle to the believers in Rome (57AD)
- The proto-female deacon (deaconess)
- Believed to be wealthy



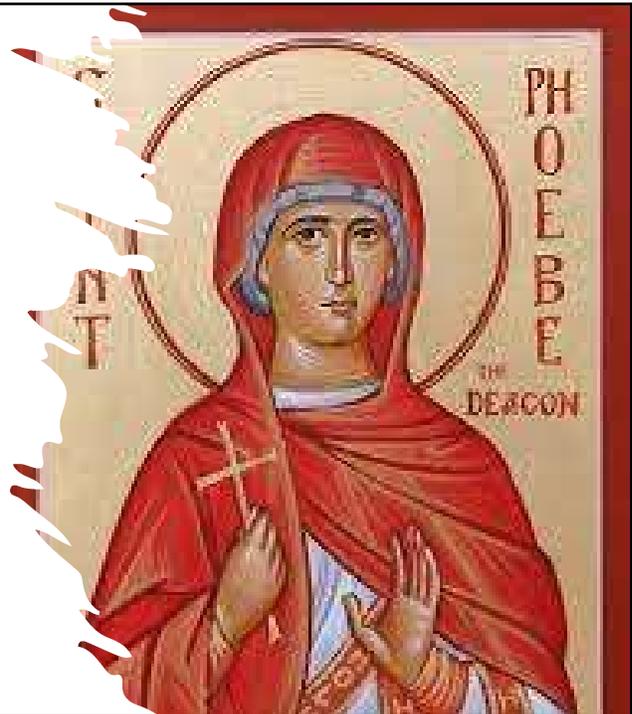
St. Phoebe: Service

- Phoebe our sister: Sister to St. Paul and to all the church community
- Helper: Greek (prostatís):
 - meaning a patroness, who aided or defended others in their cause; one who undertook to manage the cause of strangers and foreigners.
 - Used her money for travel and to protect and help others.
 - She devoted her influence and means to the brethren landing at the port of Cenchrea.



St. Phoebe: Service contd.

- Servant:
 - 'servant of the church in Cenchrea'
 - 'servant' comes from the Greek word diakonos
 - emphasis on service not title
- Trustworthy:
 - Delivering St. Paul letter to the Romans
 - St. Paul commands the Roman Christians to "receive her in the Lord"
 - St. Paul continues "assist her in whatever business"



St. Priscilla

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, ⁴ who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵ Likewise greet the church that is in their house." (Romans 16:3-5)



St. Priscilla: Background

- Jews expelled from Rome by the Roman Emperor Claudius
- Moved to Corinth and lived there
- Hosted St. Paul in their house for 18 months
 - [1 Corinthians 16:19](#): "The churches here in the province of Asia send greetings in the Lord, as do Aquila and Priscilla and all the others who gather in their home for church meetings."
- Were fellow tentmakers as St. Paul
- Had no children of the flesh



St. Priscilla: Service

- Their house was a church and school
 - [1 Corinthians 16:19](#): "The churches here in the province of Asia send greetings in the Lord, as do Aquila and Priscilla and all the others who gather in their home for church meetings."
 - Romans 16:5: "Greet also the church in their house."
- They used the fact that they are childless positively



St. Priscilla: Service contd.

- They defended St. Paul
 - "who risked their necks for my life" (Romans 16:3)
- Preacher with deep understanding
 - "set sail for Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila... And they came to Ephesus, and he left them there" (Acts 18:19)
 - "Now a certain Jew named **Apollos**, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. 25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he spoke and taught accurately the things of the Lord, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 So he began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately." (Acts 18:24-26)
 - For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal? (1 Corinthians 3:4)



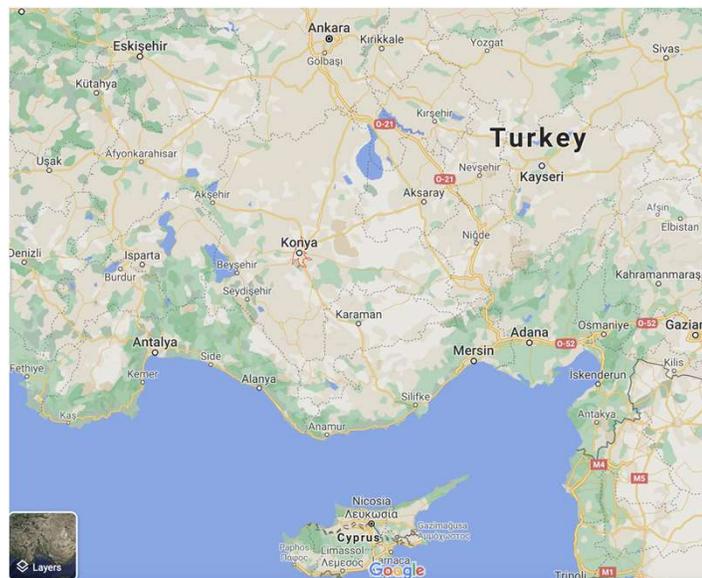
St. Thekla

- Not mentioned in the Bible; however, all the information we have is from ancient Syrian and Greek manuscripts
- Because of her many sufferings for the Faith the Church counts her as a “Protomartyr”
- And because she converted so many people to Christianity she is also known as an “Equal-to-the-Apostles”.



St. Thekla: Background

- Saint Thekla was born into a prosperous pagan family in the Lycaonian city of Iconium (present-day Konya in south-central Turkey) in A.D. 16.
- Betrothed to a young man named Thamyris
- Thekla's mother Theokleia prohibited her from joining the crowds
- She listened to St. Paul preach from her window for three days and three nights



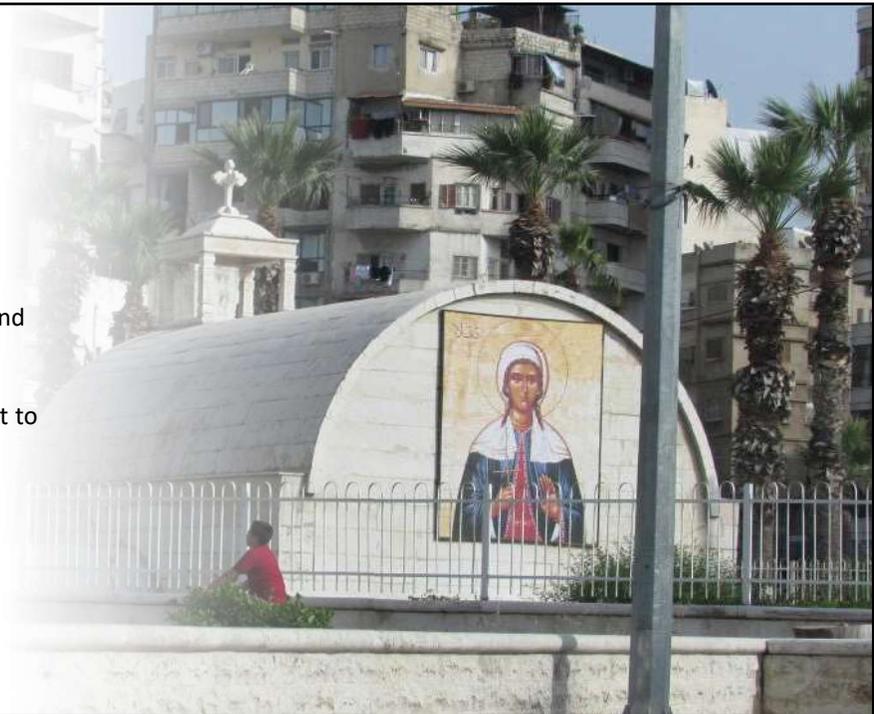
St. Thekla: Service (Chastity)

- To be burned at the stake
- Rejoining St. Paul and traveled together to Syria
- To be put to death in Antioch Syria
- Home of Tryphaena where she remained for eight days



St. Thekla: Service contd.

- Rejoining St. Paul in Myra
- Back to Syria in solitude and asceticism
- Shortly after her death a community of virgins went to live in her mountain cell



Summary of their service

- St. Phoebe
 - Prostatis (helper), Diakonos (servant), she helped and served the church in anyway possible
- St. Priscilla
 - Hostess to St. Paul, Preacher, Defender
- St. Thekla
 - Chastity and sufferings for Christ

How can we benefit from their lives/service

- As servants, our emphasis should be on service not on titles
- We should serve with all means available to us (effort, money etc.)
- When we preach or teach, we HAVE TO teach with deep understanding
- As servants, we should always trust in the path God chooses
- Service is not supposed to be a luxury or easy