

30. October 2025

Blessed Stefana: Back to the True Church

Today we will talk about a lesser-known blessed in the Catholic Church: Blessed Stefana. She was born in the 17th century into a noble Calvinist family in Gex, France. At that time, there were great tensions between Catholics and various Protestant denominations. Stefana was said to be a cheerful and friendly girl, but she was so immersed in her erroneous beliefs that she mocked the customs and ceremonies of the Catholic Church. She would sometimes sneak into Catholic churches just to play pranks. For example, she would wash her hands in the holy water font and commit other similar acts of irreverence.

However, the Lord did not leave Stefana in confusion. Since no one was there to teach her and help her recognize the truth, the Lord Himself intervened. On the Feast of Corpus Christi, Stefana watched the procession from her home. Then, it was as if Christ were looking at her from the monstrance. Suddenly, a heavenly ray fell upon her soul, illuminating it and making her recognize with complete clarity the truth of Catholicism and the falsehood of the belief she had professed until then. At that moment, her heart instantly decided to convert to Catholicism at any cost and to serve the Lord fervently. She then exclaimed inwardly with the prophet: *"bring me back that I may be restored"* (Jeremiah 31:18).

Stefana was so inflamed by this enlightenment that, following her friends' advice, she went to the Ursulines and asked them to instruct her in the Catholic faith. However, receiving instruction was not enough for her; she also wanted to leave the world and join a religious order. The Ursulines had a good impression of the young woman and promised to admit her when circumstances permitted.

However, she encountered strong resistance at home, to the point that, on one occasion, her mother stood in front of the door with a knife to threaten her. But the young woman did not give up on her purpose and, by the grace of God and with much perseverance, she finally got her mother to give in. Stefana converted to Catholicism and entered the Ursuline convent, where she received a strict education.

But a great trial awaited her. When her mother fell seriously ill, Stefana was sent from the convent to visit her. As many Calvinist preachers and faithful gathered at her home, Stefana had to defend herself against them all as the only Catholic.

However, she did so with such conviction that these sometimes heated debates ended up strengthening her faith.

When her mother recovered, Stefana returned to the convent and, after a year of probation, was admitted to the order. She proved to be a fervent nun and advanced rapidly in her spiritual life. She had such a pious and sensitive conscience that the slightest shadow of sin distressed her. She accepted all the crosses and adversities that God sent her with great patience, thus showing herself to be a faithful servant of the Lord in both suffering and joy. Above all, she lived in constant union with God, keeping her spirit focused on Him not only during prayer but also during her busiest tasks and occupations.

Stefana's greatest desire was for those who were still trapped in false doctrines to find the true Catholic faith. To this end, she seized every opportunity to proclaim the truth to those whose belief she had once shared.

She fell seriously ill at the age of twenty-eight and died on October 30, 1659. Before she passed away, she wanted to see her parents one last time and spoke to them with great sincerity about her faith. She had prayed intensely and made many sacrifices for her parents' conversion. However, they did not embrace the Catholic faith. Still, God answered her prayers in another way: two of her nephews converted to Catholicism.

I would like to conclude her life testimony with two reflections that allude to the present time.

It is undoubtedly positive that the atmosphere between Catholics and Protestants, as well as with Orthodox Christians, is no longer hostile to the point of mutual rejection and insults. However, in the context of dialogue with other denominations, we are increasingly seeing practices and convictions on the part of Catholics that no longer point out the heresies of Calvinists and Protestants in general. There is a tendency to level differences or consider them irrelevant.

This attitude contrasts sharply with the testimony of Blessed Stefana and others who officially converted to Catholicism and were willing to suffer all kinds of disadvantages for the sake of the truth of their faith.

Although the tone has changed and encounters may be more cordial, the content has not changed at all. Protestant denominations continue to harbor doctrinal

errors, and the Catholic Church remains the refuge of truth as long as it does not succumb to the errors of modernism.

Despite all the openness and cordial treatment we may have with Protestants, we must never lose sight of or cease to long for them to receive enlightenment to recognize the truth of the Church. Bearing witness to this in an appropriate way is an act of love, just as Blessed Stefana did when she prayed and offered sacrifices for Calvinists, hoping they would find their way back to the Holy Catholic Church. Blessed Stefana, pray for the sincere return of Protestants to the fold!

Meditation on the reading of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/2019/10/>