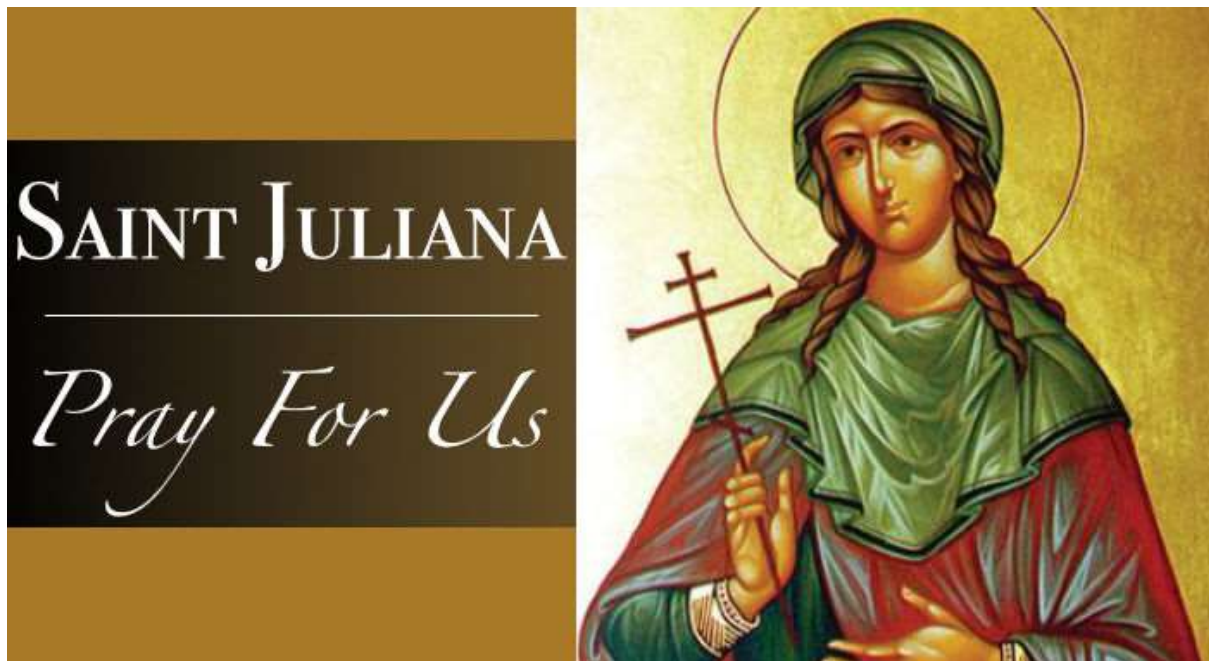# St. Juliana of Nicomedia

The veneration of the virgin martyr Juliana, a maiden of Nicomedia (Izmit, Turkey), is very ancient in the east and the west. The earliest extant account of her martyrdom was written less than three centuries after her death, but it clearly contains unhistorical interpolations. It is nonetheless likely that the essential facts of her martyrdom are reliably preserved in the text. A Christian convert, Juliana refused to marry a pagan, thereby incurring the wrath of her pagan father and a pagan suitor. She was thereupon imprisoned, tortured, and beheaded. While in prison, she is said to have been subjected to a vision of a demon, pretending to be an angel of light, urging her to sacrifice to the pagan gods. Recognizing the deception, Juliana cried out, "Lord God of heaven and earth, do not desert me, nor permit your handmaid to perish." She vanquished the tempter, who admitted to her that the devils particularly suffer when Christians attend Mass. Saint Juliana has traditionally been invoked for the safe delivery of women in labor and for protection from fever and contagious diseases.