

Barbara lived in the 4th century and brought up as a heathen. A tyrannical father, Dioscorus, had kept her jealously secluded in a lonely tower which he had built for that purpose. Here, in her forced solitude, she gave herself to prayer and study, and contrived to receive instruction and Baptism in secret by a Christian priest.

Barbara resisted her father's wish that she marry. Then on one occasion, during her father's absence, Barbara had three windows inserted into a bathhouse her father was constructing. Her purpose was thereby to honor the Trinity.

Dioscorus was enraged by her action and by her conversion. So he himself denounced her before the civil tribunal. She was horribly tortured, and at last was beheaded. Her own father, merciless to the last, acted as her executioner. God, however, speedily punished her persecutors. While her soul was being borne by angels to Paradise, a flash of lightning struck Dioscorus, and he was hurried before the judgment seat of God.

The life of St. Barbara is a vivid reminder that there can be much anger in our world and in our lives. Being in touch with God's presence in a very special way can do much toward relieving ourselves of our tendency to allow anger to control us. We should pray often against a sudden and unprovided death; and, above all, that we may be strengthened by the Holy Viaticum (Last Sacraments) against the dangers of our last hour.

History & photo from catholic.org