

Dear Respected Thomas Achan ,parents, teachers, and my dear friends. I think that I can speak for many of us when I say that I've never visited a prison or their inmates, was persecuted because of my faith,or was in fear of my life because of my faith. But, in fact, this all happend to St. Anastasia of Sirmium, one saint who has touched my heart and my mind.

Anastasia was born to noble parents, but her mother, St. Fausta, baptized her from birth. She became a martyr , but had many experiences throughout her life for the lord. She regularly visited prisons and comforted as well as speak of christ to the inmates..She taught the word of god there, converting many. She was overfilled with love and used it to give to others through charity. She was very known for her charitable acts of work which is imitated to this day. She was persecuted and suffered at the hands of her cruel husband, having been found out that she was christian, but yet, she remained steadfast to her faith. St.Anastasia is one of the saints that you would usually read about. A martyr,a believer, a sufferer, willing to die for christ, having experienced miracles and having gone through a tremendously complex story to have become a saint. Living in this day, age, and country, we are fortunate enough that no one will persecute us for our religion, and many are not forced to give up their faith or urged to. St. Anastasia taught me that there is not just one path to becoming a saint.. At the end of our lives, our goal is to get to heaven and become saints. She gave us a model of what being a great saint and to what to die for christ means, but she also taught us the littlest,but most meaningful things that we could do for Jesus.She was not afraid to talk about her faith and her God. Today, as kids in school, we are pressured by the outside world to push our religion and social lives into two separate worlds where we have drastically different personalities in both. St. Anastasia taught me that to achieve heaven, merging of the

two worlds and breaking down that barrier is necessary, and vital. I would be lying if I said that one of my friends would have said something vain about my lord, and I didn't just brush it off and ignore it, wanting to be accepted and to fit in. But, remembering our Lord and standing up for our faith is what we are taught to do as Christians and is what St. Anastasia achieved all her life.

Another trait of Anastasia's that I admire, is her complete dedication and faith towards God, no matter what obstacles had come her way. Many officials had tried to get her to abandon her faith, but she persevered without a blink of an eye, honored to suffer for Christ. Even the emperor himself, Diocletian, had tried to convince her, but she refused. He sent her to the pontiff of the Capitol and he said that she had 3 days to decide whether she was to be loyal to her faith and suffer the consequences. To that she said, "They are three too many; thou mayest imagine them already past. I am a Christian, and am anxious to die for Jesus Christ. From me thou shalt never get any other answer." She finally was put in jail, but did not die due to starvation, for God was keeping her alive without food or drink. In another attempt to kill her, he put her on a faulty ship filled with criminals meant to sink on the way to a prison on an island. Because of her complete faith in God, the boat did not sink, but only washed ashore. She finally was killed on the island as a martyr for Christ. The simple act of having complete trust in Jesus is something that we all struggle to do. St. Anastasia was a model for me, that if my faith was to be questioned by someone else, I would remember to take pride in my religion and have complete trust in the Lord. Although she was under extreme circumstances, she never had doubted her own faith, and that is an idea that we should all look up to. I'm not saying to go around preaching Bible verses in your school, but I remember to incorporate Jesus in conversations with my friends, so that they have more insight on my faith and virtues. Being different in this world is not something that is

particularly embraced. But, in order to have the best possible relationship with God and achieve heaven, we must dare to be different, as St. Anastasia was.