

As youth, we spend much of our free time hanging out with our friends. As a result, Christian service often ends up at the bottom of our priority list. Additionally, when we consider making time for service, we often think that the best way to serve is to bring about dramatic changes. However, most youth forget that even the most insignificant acts of service are seen as something great in the eyes of God – a fact that Saint Verena understood well.

Saint Verena was born to a noble Christian family in the Theban region of Egypt (modern day Luxor in Upper Egypt). St. Verena was given to Bishop Sherimon, Bishop

of Beni Suef, who taught her and baptized her. St. Verena was a relative of St. Victor of the Theban legion. Since soldiers' relatives were allowed to accompany them on missions, St. Verena joined the Theban legion, in its mission to Rhaetia (modern day Switzerland), to look after the soldiers and take care of their wounds. After St. Maurice, St. Victor and the other members of the Theban legion were martyred, St. Verena led an isolated life, likened to that of a hermit. She eventually moved into a cave near present day Zurich. She was known to fast and pray continuously and God performed several miracles through her. St. Verena served the poor and provided them food. She was particularly concerned about young girls and looked after their spiritual and physical well-being. Moreover, she enjoyed serving the sick, especially those suffering from leprosy. She used to wash their wounds and put ointments on

them, without fear of contracting an infection. As a result of her fame, the ruler arrested her and sent her to jail, where St. Maurice appeared to her to console and strengthen her. After her release from jail, God worked several miracles through her prayers and many were converted to Christianity.

At the time of her departure from this world, the Most Holy Virgin Mary appeared to St. Verena to console and strengthen her. St. Verena departed on the 4th day of the Coptic month Tout (September 14). Although her service was not grandiose, it was life-changing for the many people she helped convert to Christianity. Small, yet significant deeds, were the hallmark of St. Verena's Christian life. *"As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."* (1 Peter 4:10)

The life story of St Verena was obtained from the website of St. Maurice and St. Verena Coptic Orthodox Church, Canada; http://www.smsv.ca/our_saints.shtml

St. Verena

A Life of Christian Service

