



**Saint Juliana Lazarevo,  
Whom the Holy Church Celebrates on January 2.**

Many years ago, when Ivan the Terrible was Czar, deep in Russia there lived a little girl called Juliana. It was hard to live in Russia at that time; there were many wars and many people were killed while others suffered from hunger or disease; schools were scarce and even the churches were so few and far away that Juliana and her family could not go to them often. When she was still a child, her mother and father died, and Juliana went to live with her aunt and her cousins. Even as a little girl she amazed everyone with her devoutness and her kindness to the ill and to the poor.

Saint Juliana had a special way of helping the poor. She was good at sewing and would often sew beautiful things at night, when everyone thought she was asleep. She would sell these things secretly and with the money she received she would buy food and clothing for those in need. No one knew how much she helped others, but those she helped loved her. She not only gave them the food and clothes and money they needed, but they felt that she loved them and sympathized with them.

Our Saint never used to show off to her friends and family or brag about her piety. Although everyone liked her, she would find some excuse not to join in wild games and empty pleasures. Instead she would go off by herself and think and pray. Although she never went to school and never learned to read or write, she amazed people with her wisdom and her thoughtful answers to their questions.

“Juliana does not need any teacher,” they used to say, “because the saints themselves are her teachers.”

When Juliana was sixteen, her family decided it was time for her to marry. The Saint was not particularly glad, because she knew that she would no longer be able to have as much time for her spiritual life and her good works. She had wanted to become a nun and to devote her life to God entirely. She did not oppose her family, however, because she knew it was not the outward form, but her inner life which showed whether she was good or bad.

Saint Juliana married a very good and very rich husband and had to manage a big household, with many servants and peasants. She never scolded the servants but taught them by love, and if they did not do their work properly, she would quietly finish what they had not done. She would never let the servants wait on her, saying, “Who am I, that people such as myself should wait on me? Did not God create them, too?”

She knew that all men were equal in the sight of God, even though some were rich masters and others were poor servants. “She treated her servants like her children,” her son wrote; “she was a mother to them, not a mistress.”

Not only the poor loved Saint Juliana. Her husband and his family loved her very much, and they begged her to take care of herself, but she went on eating very little, fasting and praying often, while secretly helping the poor at night. The more she helped others, the happier and more joyful she became, and the more everyone loved her.

As many of her servants saw for themselves, Saint Juliana was still saying the Jesus prayer —“Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.”—even when she was sleeping! Her fingers also kept moving her prayer rope while she slept.

This Saint had many children, and she loved them all and taught them what she knew. However busy she was with her big household and her work for the poor, she surrounded her children with her love and her wisdom. They admired their mother and loved her, speaking and writing about her goodness and love as if she were someone extraordinary.

There were many diseases in those days, and several of her little children died. Although she was sure that they were with God in Heaven, she missed them terribly and when her two oldest sons were killed accidentally, she was so overcome with sadness, that she wished to go to a convent so that she could

spend the rest of her life in prayer and devotion to God. Feeling that she could no longer go on living as she had, she begged her husband to let her go.

“But who will take care of the other children?” he asked her. “I would be very lonely without you too. Please stay with us for we need you and love you.” She agreed to stay and continued to care for her family and household and the poor who came to her door.

Then there came a famine, and the poor were very hungry. Saint Juliana gave away all the food she had and taught her servants to make bread out of ground-up weeds or bark instead of flour. This bread became famous; people came from far away to taste it.

“Why is Juliana’s bread so sweet and good?” her neighbours wondered. But the peasants used to say that it was so good because of the love she put into making it and distributing it to the poor. “She lives in God’s way,” they would say of Saint Juliana.

After many years her husband died. Our Saint became still more tireless in her service to others and her prayers to God. She hardly slept at all, and gave away all she had to help others. She never forgot that there was something more to be done for someone else, or that she could devote still more of herself to God and His works. She never thought of her own comfort. Her children loved her very much and they used to beg her to take better care of herself, but she would answer, “What good would it be to save my body and lose my soul?” She went on living in God’s way, with no thought for her own comforts.

When Saint Juliana lay dying, surrounded by those who loved her, her children were overcome with grief. All the poor beggars and servants as well as those who had known her were sad to hear that she was dying. Her love for others and her sympathetic help had won her many friends. For her, the love of others meant as much as life itself, and it made her more and more happy as her life progressed. Because so many people loved her, stories were spread about her, making her famous, although she lived quietly as a simple home-maker, a dutiful wife and mother.

Those who were with the Saint as she lay dying marveled at the joy and peace with which she greeted death. After she had died they saw a bright halo around her head, the same halo as we see around the heads of saints in the holy icons.

Many years later, the Church recognized her great goodness and deep faith, and proclaimed her a Saint. The simple people who had known her considered her a saint in her lifetime, and they thought of her whenever they heard, “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy” (St. Mt. 5:7).

## Juliana of Lazarevo, Murom

### *Dismissal Hymn Fourth Tone*

**B**Y thy righteous deeds thou didst reveal to the world  
An image of the perfect servant of the Lord,  
By thy fasting, vigil and prayers,  
Thou wast inspired in thine evangelical life,  
Feeding the hungry and caring for the poor,  
nursing the sick and strengthening the weak;  
Now thou standest at the right hand of the Master, Christ,  
O holy Juliana, interceding for our souls.

### SYNAXARION

On this day we commemorate  
Juliana of Lazarevo, who reposed in 1604.

By the intercessions of Thy Saints, have mercy us, O God.

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**IN THEE O FULL OF GRACE  
ALL CREATION DOTH REJOICE.**