

I SPY IN MY LITTLE ICON



By Kh. Jocelyn Abyad

ST. HUNNA THE LAUNDRESS



© Father Vladimir Lysak

Washing clothes for St. Hunna would have been no simple task. First, the heavy basket of laundry would have to be walked down to the river quite a distance from her home. She would then have to pound the laundry against the rocks and rub it with sand or small stones to try to get crusted dirt and stains off the clothing, as there was no soap to clean the clothing. Sometimes a washboard was used to scrub the clothes against. You can see St. Hunna holding this in her laundry basket in the icon. After the stains and grime had been scrubbed, the garment would be soaked in the water of the river.

After the clothes had been thoroughly cleaned, she needed to wring out all of the water, hang the clothing to dry and then St. Hunna could return the clothing to its owner. Each day, though her wealthy status would have allowed her to stay home and rest, St. Hunna made the journey to the village's most needy citizens and helped them with their basic needs, especially their laundry. With a selfless heart, she used her works to glorify God.

St. Hunna had one son who she named after St. Deodatus of Nevers, her spiritual father. She later donated land for the building of a monastery that her son helped to establish. As her husband traveled extensively for his work and her son was away at the monastery, St. Hunna continued to serve the poor and frail within her community. She is not known for elaborate acts of bravery or eloquent speeches, but for her simple pious acts serving others.

Next time you are helping your mother to load the laundry in the washing machine, say a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the wonders of modern life that make our lives so much easier! And while you're at it, ask St. Hunna for her intercession to grant you the fortitude to serve others as she did, even in the simple tasks of helping with your family's laundry.

Our icon this month features St. Hunna the Laundress, sometimes known as St. Huna the Washerwoman as well. She lived in the town of Strasbourg, France, in the late 600's. Not very much is known about St. Hunna's life, but we do know that she was born into a wealthy family and was married to a nobleman.

In ancient times, even simple tasks took a lot more time than they take us today. There were no cars to run errands in, no electric stoves to cook food on and no washing machines to clean their clothes. It is said that St. Hunna cared so much for the poor that she took time to help them wash their laundry, hence her title as the Washerwoman.