

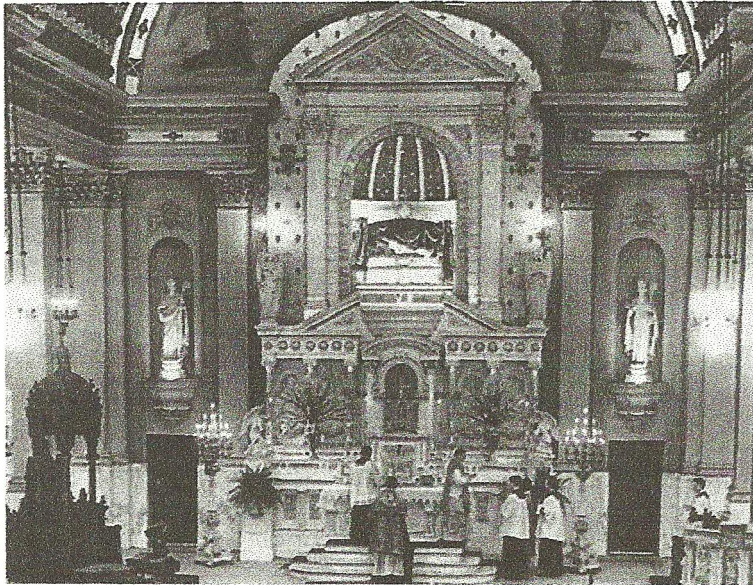
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Saint Vibiana, the Patron of Nobodies

We know next to nothing about [Saint Vibiana](#). Yet for nearly 120 years her name was attached to the Catholic cathedral in Los Angeles, and today her tomb is in the crypt of the new Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels.

When I was young, I remember my grandmother taking me to the cathedral downtown. I distinctly recall the effigy of Saint Vibiana, at that time enshrined above the cathedral altar. It was a wax cast of a young girl that covered those bones unearthed a century before in Rome, encased in glass trimmed with gilt filigree. She appeared to be asleep, and she was dressed in fine silk garments.



Casket of St. Vibiana above the cathedral altar in a 1940 photo

Who was she? She is an enigma. She is nobody and everybody. Her feast is celebrated only by us here in Los Angeles. Because we don't know the details of her life, in one way it is difficult to ascribe to her particular virtues we can imitate. Yet in another way, this makes it easier for us to identify with her.

All we know about her is that she was a martyr. And that is enough. She stands for all of us, the insignificant ones who will never be written about in history books. We follow Jesus as best we can, in ways unknown to others. Yet we too can be like Vibiana, faithful disciples of the Lord. Our lives may not be widely known, but they are known to God, who has called us each by name from before the beginning of time.

When we stand before the Tomb of Saint Vibiana, let us imagine our parents, our grandparents and great-grandparents who sacrificed so much to pass on to us the Faith. In many ways, they are like Vibiana, unknown to the world but beloved by God. To a world obsessed with celebrity, they are nobodies; but in the eyes of God, they are precious beyond all imagining.

This entry was posted by Deacon Eric on Monday, September 17th, 2007 at 10:05 pm and is filed under [Catholic](#), [History](#), [Los Angeles](#), [Thoughts](#). You can follow any responses to this entry through the [RSS 2.0](#) feed. You can [leave a response](#), or [trackback](#) from your own site.

