

St. Matilda



Matilda was the daughter of Count Dietrich of Westphalia and Reinhild of Denmark. She was also known as Mechtildis and Maud. She was raised by her grandmother, the Abbess of Eufurt convent. Matilda married Henry the Fowler, son of Duke Otto of Saxony, in the year 909. He succeeded his father as Duke in the year 912 and in 919 succeeded King Conrad I to the German throne. She was noted for her piety and charitable works. She was widowed in the year 936, and supported her son Henry's claim to his father's throne. When her son Otto (the Great) was elected, she persuaded him to name Henry Duke of Bavaria after he had led an unsuccessful revolt. She was severely criticized by both Otto and Henry for what they considered her extravagant charities. She resigned her inheritance to her sons, and retired to her country home but was called to the court through the intercession of Otto's wife, Edith. When Henry again revolted, Otto put down the insurrection in the year 941 with great cruelty. Matilda censured Henry when he began another revolt against Otto in the year 953 and for his ruthlessness in suppressing a revolt by his own subjects; at that time she prophesized his imminent death. When he did die in 955, she devoted herself to building three convents and a monastery, was left in charge of the kingdom when Otto went to Rome in 962 to be crowned Emperor (often regarded as the beginning of the Holy Roman Empire), and spent most of the declining years of her life at the convent at Nordhausen she had built. She died at the monastery at Quedlinburg on March 14 and was buried there with Henry. Her feast day is March 14th.