

St. Ursula and the Virgins of Cologne

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October 21th



In the fourth century the pagan Saxons began to invade England, intent on destroying the Catholic Faith and violating the purity of all young English virgins. It was in the midst of this that a group of remarkable English girls fled from England to the Continent. This group included Saint Ursula and ten of her friends, each having a thousand companions, making their number 11,011 in all. However, in the year 383 Saint Ursula and her 11,010 companions were all found slaughtered for their purity and their Faith.

This great martyrdom occurred in Cologne, at Germany, and a shrine has been erected to them there, containing as many of their bones as could be rescued. A Religious Order of nuns in the Catholic Church was established by Saint Angela Merici in honor of Saint Ursula in the year 1535. They are known as the Ursulines.

The Order of Ursulines, founded in 1535 by St. Angela de Merici, which is especially devoted to the education of young girls, has also helped to spread throughout the world the name and the cult of St. Ursula.

Saint Ursula is the patroness of Catholic education (especially of girls), Cologne, Germany, educators, holy death, schoolchildren, students, and teachers. She is often represented in art and icons as a maiden shot with arrows, with a clock, and is often accompanied by a number of other companions who are being martyred in assorted, often creative ways.