

Hungarian Saints

Saint Gunther (955 – 1045)



The first part of Gunther's life, which was a cousin of St Stephen of Hungary and related to the Emperor St Henry, was by no means inspired by the holiness of his relatives. Until his fiftieth year he was a worldly and ambitious nobleman and none too scrupulous at that.

He made up his mind to expiate his sins by becoming a monk. Gunther then went on pilgrimage to Rome and on his return entered Niederaltaich as a monk. The experiment was not successful: there was friction between him and his monks and the monastery began seriously to suffer. He continued his eremitical existence, going from place to place to beg alms for the poor, and encouraging his cousin Stephen in the Christianization of his realm.

It is said that Gunther received the gift of infused knowledge and became a powerful preacher though deficient in ordinary ecclesiastical learning: he could probably neither read nor write. He atoned for the excesses of his earlier years by severe mortification and he exercised a rigid discipline over his followers to the extent of rationing the amount of water which each of his monks might have at disposal.

Gunther died at about the age of ninety, on October 9, 1045.

His feast celebrated at October 9.