

# ANONYMOUS: Lives of Sts. Robert (Rupert) and Erendruda

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## TWO LIVES OF STS. RUPERT (ROBERT) AND ERENDRUDA (ERENTRAUD)

Translated by Karen Rae Keck

### INTRODUCTORY NOTE: HOLY AUSTRIA

Recently more and more people have come to know and to love the Orthodox saints of the West. We would like to introduce two such saints, Rupert of Salzburg and the nun Erendruda, whose lives have apparently not previously appeared in English. ("Rupert" is the German spelling of "Hrodibert", rendered "Robert" in French and English.)

While the Roman provinces of Noricum and Pannonia had been strongholds of the early church - St. Martin of Tours, for example, was a native of Burgenland - the barbarian invasions hit them with such violence that Christianity eventually almost disappeared. The re-introduction of the faith was due largely to Theodo I, Duke of Bavaria in the late 600s. St. Rupert was not the only Frankish missionary whom Theodo brought into his territory; another, St. Emmeramus, met a martyr's death when, to help a distressed princess, he pretended to be the father of her illegitimate child, thus permitting her lover to escape the vengeance of the clan.

Although Rupert was a Frank, tradition also associates him with Ireland; certainly the old Roman city of Juvavia (Salzburg), which he refounded as his headquarters, quickly became a center of Irish missionary activity in Central Europe. The Austrian church was pervaded with Celtic influence, and was even organized on Celtic lines under "abbot-bishops" in succession from Rupert. The most famous was St. Virgil the Geometer, otherwise Feargal O'Neill from Leinster. St. Virgil is remembered today mostly as an astronomer who shocked his more intellectually staid contemporaries by speculating about the habitability of the Antipodes; he was also an outstanding Orthodox hierarch who evidently tolerated the use of the vernacular at baptismal services and launched, in Carinthia and Slovenia, one of the first attempts to evangelize the Slavs.

The Austrian Church did not long retain its free-spirited identity. Four years after St. Virgil's passing, the Austro-Bavarian duchy was conquered by Charlemagne and rapidly integrated into the European mainstream. The abbot-bishops gradually changed from spiritual leaders into worldly potentates, Electors of the Western Empire. By a terrible irony, the inheritors of the mantle of St. Virgil became the chief opponents and persecutors of Cyril and Methodius whom he had foreshadowed. Nevertheless, although Austria and Bavaria have not been Orthodox for a thousand years, the saints of the Orthodox period still live in Christ, interceding for their countries and all humanity. May the reader of the following Lives be saved through the prayers of Saints Rupert and Erendruda!

--N. Redington

## THE LIFE OF SAINT RUPERT OF SALZBURG, APOSTLE TO BAVARIA AND AUSTRIA

(March 27)

1. Today is the feast of St. Rupert, a most holy and blessed man. This feast reminds us of his passing into joyful paradise; it shows forth mystical gladness to devout minds. It renews delight in our hearts while the course of years runs. As the Scriptures say, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." He who passes into the angels' joy is made worthy of men's remembrance: as the Scriptures say, "A wise son is the glory of the father", and how great is his glory, who redeemed so many barbarian nations by the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus through the Gospel!
2. When Childebert the king of the Franks was in the second year of his reign, the Bishop of Worms was the Holy Confessor Rupert, who was born into the ranks of the Frankish nobility, but was nobler in faith and piety. He was gentle and chaste, simple and prudent, devout in praise of God, full of the Holy Spirit. He was also provident in his plans and righteous in his judgement. He was secure in the strength of both his right and left arms, and his good deeds shaped his flock in his own image, because he admonished them with his words and the example of his works confirmed them. He frequently kept vigils; then he weakened himself with fasting. He adorned his work with compassion. He gave away his riches that the poor might enrich themselves, because he believed himself to be one who should receive the naked and poor.
3. Therefore, when the exceeding fame of this most venerable man had spread to the ends of the universe, very famous men, not only in that region but from other nations, poured in to hear his most holy teaching. Some in anxious sorrow came to receive consolation through his pious conversation, and others from the church came to hear pure truth from him. Many were freed from the snares of the ancient enemy by his loving dedication, and they started out on the way to eternal life. But the unfaithful, who were often numerous in the vicinity of Worms, not understanding his sanctity, exiled him from the city in great shame. They afflicted him with terrible sufferings and beat him with rods. At that time Theodo, the Duke of Bavaria, hearing about the miracles which this most holy man had done, and about his blessedness, desired to see him, and, having sent resolutely his very best men, he

summoned him: how long might he consent to visit the regions of Bavaria, and could he instruct him in the way of life-giving faith? The blessed bishop, when he saw such a legion of questions, and knew that these came from Divine dispensation, thanked the Merciful One, because " those who sat in the darkness and the shadow of death" longed to know the author of life, Jesus Christ.

4. Consequently, he sent his own priests, as if they were rays of faith, with the ambassadors before him to the Duke, and he himself, after a short time, undertook the journey to Bavaria. When the Duke heard the news, he was overcome with great joy, and he and a large retinue hastened to meet St. Rupert. In the city of Regensburg, he with the greatest zeal overtook the saint. Then St. Rupert, not saying he was hungry, instructed the Duke in the mysteries of the heavens, and he strengthened him in the true faith. He made the Duke renounce the cult of idols, and he baptized him in the name of the Holy and Indivisible Trinity. The nobles and the people, whether gentry or plebians, were baptized with him, praising Jesus Christ the Saviour of the world, who considered them worthy to be called wonderously into His light from their darkness through His own confessor, the most blessed Rupert. Through his word, their darkened hearts were lit up, and the breasts of the unfaithful thirsted for the fountain of life.

5. When the saint had demonstrated the Divine grace by baptizing the Duke and his people, Theodo understood the sacrament of saving baptism. He begged the saint, and Rupert boarded a ship and sailed up the River Danube. Through the towns, villas, and forts, he declared the gospel of Christ in a free voice. To the ends of Noricum, into the lower parts of Pannonia, he himself brought the light of Christ's ministry, placed as it were like a bright lamp above a candelabra. Then, having returned through the land, he entered Lauriacum (Lorch on the River Enns), in whose water he converted many who were regenerated in baptism from the cult of idols. In the name of the Lord he cleansed more who had been oppressed by various weaknesses. After he had left Lauriacum, he saw with fervor the errors of the race in that region; he boldly undertook to destroy idols, to smash images, to proclaim everywhere the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ as well as His sacred incarnation, that they might believe Him to be at once God and man; who was truly begotten of the Father before the Morning Star; who is the Word of God truly born of a virgin mother in the latter days for the salvation of humanity; who illumines all men who come into the world.

6. But when the man of God considered whether to become the Bishop according to the entreaties of the Duke and his people, he went to the stagnant waters of the Wallersee, where a church had been built in honor of the chief apostle Peter. He moved from there to the Juvavian (Salzach) River where once the city of Juvavia stood, which had been erected in ancient, miserable times. Among the Bavarian cities it had held noble eminence, but by this time it had been overrun by thickets and few people lived in the near-ruins. The servant of God considered this suitable for his episcopal cathedral, because being among the mountains it was remote from the tumult of the crowds. He entrusted himself with propriety to the Duke, and recounted to him with great enthusiasm his plan to build a basilica there in honor of the blessed Peter, Chief of the Apostles, and endowed with all the splendors necessary by the generosity of Theodo. Afterward having ordained priests, he made all of them celebrate the daily offices in an agreeable order. The holy man of God wished to supplement his site, so he asked the Duke for more money, and with the appropriate legal formalities bought the manor of Piding for thousands of solidi. Thus, successively, by the aid of God and the bequests of kings or dukes or faithful men, the

establishment began to grow.

7. Later after a certain number of days worthy men told the blessed hierarch something of great wonder which had happened when they had gone into the unnamed wilderness area now called Bongotobum (Pongau). Three or four times they had seen heavenly portents of fiery lamps, and they had experienced the smell of sweet and wonderful aromas there. So the pious bishop sent the priest Domingus to that same place, because of all the marvels which were present on top of these portents. He hoped that the priest would diligently test the truth of such signs by setting in that place a wooden cross which the holy one had blessed and constructed with his own hand. Domingus, when he arrived, at once began the First Hour with the religious who had come with him. They saw a bright lamp emitted from the sky descend and light up the entire region as if it were the sun. Domingus saw this vision on three nights, accompanied with the sweetness of a wondrous odor. He erected the blessed cross in that same place, and it moved back above the hut toward St. Rupert, confirming the first assertion with a sure report! St. Rupert, communicating his design to Theodo, went away into the wilderness to the very same place, and seeing that it was suitable for human habitation he began to cut down aged oaks, and to bring heavy material back into the plain of level ground, that he might build a church with dwellings for the servants of God.

8. At that time, Theodo fell into ill health, and as he felt the end of his life approaching, he called to his bedside his son Theodobert. He appointed him to be the Duke of Noricum, admonishing him to obey St. Rupert and to aid him conscientiously in his divine work, as well as to raise up aptly the sacred place of the Juvavian church with love, honor, and dignity. He adjured him also to honor it and exalt it. When he had instructed his son with these doctrines and all that he desired, he closed his last day and fell asleep in the Lord. After this, the Duke Theodobert continued to go with his best men to St. Rupert, because his sanctity was worth seeing. Coming to the saint in his far hermitage, the Duke showered him with pious affection, and he went to the church which the saint had built there. The Duke donated three milestones in honor of St. Maximilian. He also gave property on all sides of the forest, as well as an Alpine villa. He contributed other gifts to nurture the monks, whom the most blessed Rupert had ordained to the service of God.

9. When these things had been done, the man of God saw that the height of Bavarian dignity had submitted himself to the yoke of Christ but had left worldly matters to the errors of the clan. Therefore he accompanied the Duke to his homeland. From thence Rupert returned with twelve of his special friends (among whom were Kuniald and St. Gisilarius, both priests and both holy men). His niece St. Erendruda, a virgin dedicated to Christ, accompanied them to the city of Juvavia. There in the high fortress of the city he built a monastery in honor of Our Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour and His sacred Mother, the Ever-Virgin Mary. He placed in that same monastery St. Erendruda, that she might serve the King of Heaven. And with the support of Duke Theodobert, who gave many gifts to the community, he developed their social life rationally in all things.

10. When these things had been done, the blessed man became eager to complete the teaching he had begun with the help of the High Priest. Escorted by his flock, he resolved to visit his followers in the Norican kingdom. Leaving the city of Juvavia and visiting the people on whom the light of faith had not

yet shown, he sowed the wheat of faith amidst the grass. The deception of the devil fled from the hearts of these barbarian hordes, and Rupert sowed there faith, love, mercy, and humility, for through these Christ, the giver and source of all good, is able to enter the domicile of the human mind. When he had travelled to the ends of Bavaria, he had converted all to faith in Christ, and had strengthened those who remained steadily faithful. Having sent out several priests and men of God who brought the Divine Mysteries to the people, he was eager to go back to Juvavia. Because he was full of the spirit of prophecy, he knew that the day of his calling was at hand. He told this to his disciples, who showed sadness and consternation. This was the reason that there was much weeping and great mourning when he left the brand-new Christian people.

11. He, however, with the hope that had been established by Christ, commended the city, the Norican people, and all who had turned to faith in Christ to the Most High and All-Knowing God, and he chose Vitale, a holy man whom the people themselves had accepted, as his successor. When the forty days of Lent had been observed, Bishop Rupert, the man of God, began to be exhausted by a high fever. When the most holy day of the Resurrection of Our Saviour Jesus dawned, he celebrated the solemn liturgy, and he was fortified for the journey with the sacred body of Christ. By his mellifluous admonitions to natural piety and his last words of love, he strengthened his brothers and sons. Then, amidst the holy tears of the band, amidst the weeping of the holy ones: the death rattle. He returned his most pure soul to God. The host of angels heard from the saints in the heavens and bore his holy soul with a melodious voice to eternal happiness. Thus he rested in peace. He whose life was praiseworthy and blameless was in death equally blessed. Thus it is written: " Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints," whom the angels bear into heaven. Frequent miracles were attributed to him, for God was gracious through the body of this holy man in visitations. His intercessions adorned his faithful and the Church through innumerable miracles. Indeed the Blessed God - one in three persons - lives and reigns; to Him be all praise and glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

## THE LIFE OF SAINT RUPERT, CONTAINING THE LIFE OF SAINT ERENDRUDA OF SALZBURG

(June 30)

1. The blessed and pious confessor of Christ, Rupert, was born of a noble and royal family of the Franks, but he was far nobler in faith and in devoutness. He was a man prudent, gentle, and truthful in his conversation, just in his judgement, and circumspect in his counsels. He was known for his charity, and in the universe of morals he stood out in his honesty. Indeed many flocked to his most sacred teaching, and they received the proclamation of eternal salvation from him. When the report of his blessed conversation grew far and wide, he found in his acquaintance the Duke of Bavaria, Theodo, who asked of the man of God as many intercessions as he was able. He began to ask through his distinguished messengers that the saint might consent to visit his province with his blessed teaching. To this the preacher of truth, stung by divine love, gave his assent, and, having first arranged his affairs, he consented to go to the flock of Christ which would be gained because of him.

2. When the Duke had heard this preaching, he was overwhelmed with great joy, and continued with his attendants on the way to meet the blessed saint and doctor with all honor and dignity, as much as he possibly could. He caught up with him in the city of Regensburg. The blessed man began to admonish him soon about Christian conversation and to instruct him in the universal faith. Thus, he converted the Duke and many other noble men to the true faith, and he baptized them. He confirmed them in the holy religion. Praying, the Duke allowed the holy man to choose a place, pleasing to himself and to his followers: whichever place he desired, so that he could build a church and complete all the other things needed for the work of the Church. The man of God, having accepted the Duke's permission, seized the chance to sail down the Danube valley until he came to the city of Lorch, where he proclaimed the same doctrine of the holy life. Many there who were ill, many who were languishing in oppression, were cleansed by the strength of God.

3. Passing through all the Alpine region, he came at length to the kingdom of the Carinthians. Being asked, he converted that kingdom and cleansed it with the baptism of Christ. Climbing the highest mountain, called Tauern (Mons Durus), he preached to the Vandals and attained the greatest fruit graciously given by the Lord. He also built there many churches, and he established several monasteries. At last, having charged his disciples, religious, priests, and clergy to keep the Christian faith, he returned to the territory of Passau. Having come back, he began to travel around the province. He reached a certain lake which is called the Wallersee, where he had built and consecrated a church in honor of the Apostle Peter. There often the renowned Duke distributed his personal possessions in the same place where he originally met the saint on his rounds.

4. Afterward another place came to the attention of St. Rupert. It was up the River Salzach, or as it was known in olden times, the Juvavian Stream. It had been named in the time of the Roman emperors, and a beautiful little house had been built, which was now discovered hidden in the trees. Hearing this, the man of God wished to look at it with his own eyes and experience the truth about the thing, because he thought that it would profit the faithful souls. Giving thanks to divine grace, he began to ask Duke Theodo that he might bestow his authority upon this place, to exorcize and purify it and to establish a church according to his pleasure. The Duke at once consented, bestowing possessions over two leucas in length and width, that he might do what was useful to the Church. Then St. Rupert began to renew the place (Salzburg), building a beautiful church to the First God, which he dedicated in honor of St. Peter, the foremost of the Apostles: and he built finally a cloister with other houses for the use of religious men, orderly throughout. Afterward he ordained priests, and he instituted daily solemn observance of the canonical hours. St. Rupert wished to increase the places of service to God. With the help of God, from the gift of the King and Duke, and by the behests of faithful men, the places began to grow.

5. The man of God, seeing the flock of the Lord depart over the precipice of vices because of the longings of the women, prayed to God in his heart, saying, "Lord, if it is good in your eyes, I will pick for myself other people fit for your service and refinement, through whom the practice of your good life may become attractive to the women, and, as well, to the men." He had in his country, that is, Vangionum in the state of Wormatia, known a certain noble virgin, consecrated from the cradle to God. Her name was Erendruda (Erentraud), and he wanted to send for her that she with others might found a religious order for women. He built a place and a mansion appropriate for the chaste in the Juvavian fort,

and he gave it to the charge of the Theotokos. When it was completed, he went to call Erendruda to himself, and great joy came over the face of the blessed Rupert, because he had lived to see this before the day of his death. Therefore the holy priest led her into the oratory, which was consecrated to the Theotokos, and said: "Lady Sister, do you know why I have asked you here?" She replied: "Yes, Father, I know, for Our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed it to my spirit, saying: Go in peace as you are called. Behold I will be with you, and I will lead to myself through you many women's souls, whom you shall guide by your example to the true religious path, coming to me." When he heard this, the blessed priest rejoiced greatly in God.

6. After a short time, many virgins and noble matrons came to the virgin Erendruda, and she led them with such discernment that in a brief time all showed their learning and gave appropriate service to God. Such was the virgin Erendruda in custom that she reckoned wealth to herself whatever solace any disciple of hers received as a divine gift. Such was she in prayer, that she considered it her whole health. Such was she in aspect, that whether she met good people or bad, she thought herself lower than they. What is to be remembered of the constancy and restraint of her life, of her largesse in almsgiving, of her rectitude, of her steadfastness in vigil and her sanctity in all of religious life? If at first she was not strong in one or another of these, it ought to be overlooked rather than investigated.

7. At length, when the blessed Rupert knew by divine revelation that his death was at hand, he said to Blessed Erendruda, whom he had called to him: "My beloved sister, my private conversation is to you; I pray that you will tell none of this, as I have told you a secret. It has pleased God to show me my departure from this Earth, and now I ask, Lady Sister, that you pray for my soul when God sees fit to call it to His peace." The holy virgin responded with tears: "If it is true as you say, master, arrange that I die before you do!" The bishop said to her: "Sister, most dear one! You should not wish to hasten to an inopportune death, nor to choose your exit while sin is great. Our end has not been fixed in our wishes, but in divine providence." The holy virgin prostrated herself at the feet of the priest and begged him: "Father, master, I ask you to remember that you have led me here from my own country, and now you wish to leave me a poor orphan. I ask only one thing of you, that if I am not worthy to depart before you or with you, at least intercede as a witness with God that I may be worthy of the passing wished for!" The most holy priest Rupert granted these requests, and when for a long time they had joined in talk sweetly about eternal life, and they had wept together, they said a final sad farewell.

8. The blessed Rupert celebrated the liturgy before the entire church on the day of the Resurrection of the Lord. He gave a homily to the people, and distributed the Body and Blood of Christ. He gave the blessing and benediction. When the Mass was ended, he fell down in prayer. Commending his spirit into the hands of the Heavenly Father, he fell asleep in the Lord on the twenty-seventh day of March. He was buried in the Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul, which he had himself consecrated to their honor. The entire population of Noricum mourned him, because he had been an apostle to that race, and he had never grieved anyone in any way. After this, the blessed Erendruda sat night and day in the oratory and prayed to the Lord with tears for the soul of her now dead friend Rupert. She kept watchful vigils and awaited the gift of promised consolation. At last one night the holy Rupert came to her in a vision and said: "I have come, beloved sister, to the kingdom of Christ, for which I have labored for a long time." Wide awake, she gave thanks to God, and at once she began to feel ill. She called together all the sisters; she

exhorted them; she received the Sacrament of the Church. After they had exchanged the sweet kiss of peace, she gave up her spirit. After this, her sacred body, preserved with spices, was buried in the Monastery of the Most Holy Theotokos with great veneration on the thirtieth day of June.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

The Latin texts of the lives translated here can be found in the \* Acta Sanctorum \* of the Bollandists under March 27. Another, possibly older, Latin life of Rupert is given in Vol. 6 of the Merovingian series of \*Monu- menta Germaniae Historica\* and excerpts in Latin from other lives are in John Colgan's \* Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae \* (Louvaine, 1647). An English translation of a few sentences from the Life of Erendruda occurs in \*Butler's Lives of the Saints\* by Thurston and Attwater under June 30.

An extremely recent secondary source on Austria-Bavaria in Merovingian and Carolingian times is \* Germany in the Early Middle Ages \* by T. Reuter (London: Longman,1991). Some material on the Austro-Irish Church can be found in John T. McNeill's \* The Celtic Churches \* (University of Chicago, 1974).

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O Lord, have mercy on Thy servants Karen, Norman, and the Archpriest Robert.

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THE END, AND TO GOD BE THE GLORY!