Leudwinus

Saint Leudwinus, Count of Treves (*Leodewin, Liutwin, Ludwin*) (c. 660 - † 29. September, 722 in Reims) founded an abbey in Mettlach. He was Archbishop of Treves and Laon.[1][2] His feast day is September 23. He is the patron saint of Mettlach parish and his relics are carried by procession at the annual Pentecost celebration through the town.[3]

He is the son of Saint Warinus, the paternal grandson of Saint Sigrada and his uncle was Saint Leodegarius.

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Early life

Leudwinus was born a Frankish nobleman and was a member of one of the most powerful clans in Austrasia.[3] He was the son of Warinus, Count of Poitiers and Gunza of Metz.[3][4] Lambert of Maastricht was his kinsman. His Frankish name is Liutwin.[3]

Leudwinus spent his early life at the royal court of Austrasia.[3] He was styled Count of Treves.[3]

He received his education from his maternal uncle, Saint Basinus, Archbishop of Treves.[3] In 697, Leudwinus signed the Deed of Echternach with his uncle.[3]

Marriage

Saint Leudwinus

Saint Lietwinus of Treves

Archbishop of Treves

Born	c. 660 Mettlach (today Merzig-Wadern, Saarland, Germany)
Died	September 29, 722 (aged 62) Treves, Austrasia (today Rhineland-Palatinate, Germany)
Honored in	Roman Catholic Church
Major shrine	Lutwinuskirche, Mettlach Abbey
Feast	September 29
Attributes	Eagle

Leudwinus was initially uninterested in an ecclesiastical career. Instead he married Willigard of Bavaria. They had issue:[4]

- Milo, Count of Treves[3]
- Wido (Guy), Count of Hornbach[3]
- (apparently) Chrotrude of Treves (Rotrude), who married Charles Martel and became Duchess of Austrasia.[3][4]

Mettlach Abbey

According to legend, it all began when Leudwinus went hunting near Saar. He grew tired and fell asleep under the shade of a tree. As he slept the sun changed positions exposing him to its scorching hot rays. An eagle swept down and sat on Leudwinus with its wings spread out. When Leudwinus awoke, his servant told him how the eagle had protected him from being burned by the sun. Coincidentally, Leudwinus happened to be napping at the site of the Miracle Eagle near the chapel of St. Denis of Paris. Leudwinus saw this as a God-sent sign to establish a Benedictine monastery at that site. Dionysius the Chapel soon developed into a Christian missionary center. In its place now stands the parish church of St. Gangolf in Mettlach.

When Leudwinus became a widower, he joined the monastery he founded at Mettlach as a simple monk.[2]

Bishop of Triers

In 697 Leudwinus was appointed coadjutor of his uncle Basinus von Trier.[5] In 698, he cofounded the Echternack Abbey at Mettlach.[5]

When Archbishop Bastinus died on 4 March 705, Leudwinus succeeded him and was consecrated Archbishop of Treve.[2][3][5][6] Leudwinus was also appointed bishop of Laon.[2][5] This made Leudwinus one of the most important church dignitaries in the Frankish kingdom.

Death

Leudwinus died 29 September 722 at Reims.[3] He was succeeded as Archbishop of Treve by his son, Milo, who brought his father's remains to Treve to be buried. However local customs prevented this and Leudwinus' family decided to let the dead saint choose his own place of burial. His coffin was placed alone on a ship that was sailed by itself, first to Moselle, then Saar and finally docked at Mettlach where the church bells began to ring.

Leudwinus was buried in St. Mary's Church at the Abbey at Mettlach.[1][3] In 990, St. Mary's Church was replaced by a new structure called the Old Tower, the oldest preserved stone building in Saar.

In 1247, Leudwinus' relics were transferred to the newly constructed Leudwinus Chapel (Liutwinuskapelle). About 200 years later, his remains were reburied again in a new chapel connected to the Church at the Abbey. During the French Revolution, the monastery was purchased by the Boch family. He had the building demolished and built Liutwinus Cathedral in Mettlach, where the relics of the saint are located today.

Reports of miracles at Leudwinus' grave in Mettlach made it a popular pilgrimage site over the centuries.[1]

Records from Leudwinus' time as bishop are collected in the Gesta Treverorum.

Feast Day of St. Leudwinus

Leudwinus' original feast day was September 29, the day of his death. However this is also the feast day of Saint Michael the Archangel. After the Second Vatican Council, the Feast of Saint Leudwinus was moved to September 23 and it's also the feast of his uncle, Saint Basinus.

See also

- Gesta Treverorum
- Order of St Benedict
- Lambertus
- Saint Basinus
- Archdiocese of Treves
- Frankish Empire
- Charles Martel
- Milo, Bishop of Treves and Reims
- Saint Warinus
- Gunza von Metz
- Saint Sigrada
- Saint Leodegarius

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2. ^ *a b c d* "St. Ludwin" (http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4348). *Catholic Online, Saints & Angels*. Catholic.org. Retrieved June 25, 2012.
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- Constantin von Briesen: *Historical Documents of the Merzig-Wadern Circle (Urkundliche Geschichte des Kreises Merzig-Wadern)* Franz Stein, Saarlouis 1863.

External links

- "Lutwinuskirche" (http://st-lutwinus.org/) in St. Lutwinus Church, Mettlach.
- "St. Ludwin" (http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=4348) Profile at Catholic.org

Catholic Church titles		
Preceded by **St.Basinus**	**Archishop of Treves** 4 March 705 – 29 September 722	Succeeded by **Milo**