

Templar at Olesnica Mala (*Klein Oels*). Hedwig always helped the poor and donated all her fortune to the Church. According to legend, she went barefoot even in winter, and when she was urged by the Bishop of Wroclaw to wear shoes, she took them in her hands. On 15 October 1243, Hedwig died and was buried in Trzebnica, while relics of her are preserved at Andechs Abbey and St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin.

VENERATION

Hedwig was canonized in 1267 by Pope Clement IV, a supporter of the Cistercian order, at the suggestion of her grandson Prince-Archbishop Wladylaw of Salzburg. She is the patron saint of Silesia, of Andechs, and of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Wroclaw and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Gorlitz. Her feast day according to the General Roman Calendar is on October, 16. A 17th century legend has it, that Hedwig on a pilgrimage to Rome stopped at Zell in Austria, where she had healing waters spring up at a source which up to today bears her name.

In 1773 King Frederick II of Prussia, having conquered and annexed Silesia in 1742, had St. Hedwig's Cathedral in Berlin built for the Catholic Upper Silesian immigrants, now the mother church of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Berlin.

CHILDREN

Hedwig and Henry I had seven children:

1. Agnes (ca. 1190 — before 11 May 1214).
2. Boleslaw (ca. 1191 — 10 September 1206/08).
3. Henry II the Pious (ca. 1198 — killed in Battle of Legnica, 9 April 1241)
4. Konrad the Curly (ca. 1198 — Czerwony Kosciol, 4 September 1213).
5. Sophie (ca. 1200 — before 22/23 March 1214).
6. Gertrude (ca. 1200 — Trebnitz, 6/30 December 1268), Abbess of Trebnitz
7. A son [Wladyslaw?] (before 25 December 1208 — 1214/17).

* (excerpted from: //en.wikipedia.org)

Saint Hedwig of Silesia

Feast Day: October 16



Patron of

Orphaned Children

Saint Hedwig of Silesia

LIFE

*The daughter of Duke Berthold IV of Merania and his second wife Agnes of Wettin, was born at Andechs Castle in the Duchy of Bavaria. Her elder sister Agnes married King Philip II of France (annulled in 1200), her sister Gertrude (killed in 1213) King Andrew II of Hungary, while the youngest Matilda (Mechtild) became abbess at the Benedictine convent of Kitzingen in Franconia, where Hedwig also received her education. By her sister Gertrude, she was the aunt of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary.

DUCHESS CONSORT

At the age of twelve, Hedwig married Henry I the Bearded, son and heir of the Piast duke Boleslaw I the Tall of Silesia. As soon as Henry succeeded his father in 1201, he had to struggle with his Piast relatives, at first with his uncle Duke Mieszko IV Tanglefoot who immediately seized the Upper Silesian Duchy of Opole. In 1206 Henry and his cousin Duke Wladyslaw III Spindleshanks of Greater Poland agreed to swap the Silesian Lubusz Land against the Kalisz region, which met with fierce protest by Wladyslaw's III nephew Wladyslaw Odonic. When Henry went to Gasawa in 1227 to meet his Piast cousins, he narrowly saved his life, while High Duke Leszek I the White was killed by the men of the Pomerelian Duke Swietopelk II, instigated by Wladyslaw Odonic.

The next year Henry's ally Wladyslaw III Spindleshanks succeeded Leszek I as High Duke; however as he was still contested by his nephew in Greater Poland, he made Henry his governor at Krakow, whereby the Silesian duke once again became entangled into the dispute over the Seniorate Province. In 1229 he was captured and arrested at Plock Castle by rivaling Duke Konrad I of Masovia. Hedwig proceeded to Plock pleading for Henry and was able to have him released.

Her actions promoted the reign of her husband: Upon the death of the Polish High Duke Wladyslaw III Spindleshanks in 1231, Henry also became Duke of Greater Poland and the next year prevailed as High Duke at Krakow. He thereby was the first of the Silesian Piast descendants of Wladyslaw II the Exile to gain the rule over Silesia and the Seniorate Province according to the 1138 Testament of Boleslaw III Krzywousty.

WIDOW

In 1238, upon his death, Henry was buried at the Cistercian convent of Trzebnica Abbey (*Kloster Trebnitz*), which he had established in 1202 at Hedwig's request. The widow moved into the convent, which was led by her daughter Gertrude. She invited numerous German religious from the Holy Roman Empire into the Silesian lands, as well as German settlers who founded numerous cities, towns and villages in the course of the *Ostsiedlung*, while cultivating barren parts of Silesia for agriculture.

Hedwig and Henry had several daughters, though only one surviving son, Henry II the Pious, who succeeded his father as Duke of Silesia and Polish High Duke. The widow however had to witness the killing of her son, vainly awaiting the support of Emperor Frederick II, during the Mongol invasion of Poland at the Battle of Legnica (*Wahlstatt*) in 1241. The hopes for a re-united Poland were lost and even Silesia fragmented into numerous Piast duchies under Henry's II sons. Hedwig and her daughter-in-law, Henry's II widow Anna of Bohemia, established a Benedictine abbey at the site of the battle in Legnickie Pole, settled with monks descending from Opatowice in Bobhemia.

Hedwig and Henry had lived a very pious life, and Hedwig had great zeal for religion. She had supported her husband in donating the Augustinian provostry at Nowogrod Bobrzanski (*Naumburg*) and the commandry of the Knights