



A JOURNAL OF ORTHODOX FAITH AND CULTURE

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ORTHODOX ROOTS, WOODS AND WATER

A Decade of Pilgrimage Through Germany and Switzerland

As well as being active in her parish of Joy of All Who Sorrow Bulgarian Orthodox Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, German teacher Popadia Margaret Bauman has spent the past decade preparing material for her forthcoming Orthodox guidebook to the German-speaking lands, and has graciously taken on the multi-faceted role of researcher, author, and guest editor for this issue of *Road to Emmaus*.

RTE: Popadia Margaret, how did you become interested in the lives of Orthodox saints of the German-speaking lands?

PDA. MARGARET: I am a convert to Orthodoxy, of German and Swiss parentage, a former German teacher, and as a young adult I lived in Germany and Holland for seven years. I began reading these saints' lives much later, when, as a teacher, I wanted a patron saint for a German-language class for homeschooled children, and discovered St. Ansgar, Bishop of Bremen and Enlightener of Sweden; St. Gall, Enlightener of Switzerland; and a few shorter lives. At the same time I learned about the work of St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco to uncover and promote Western European saints, and also the *Vita Patrum* of St. Gregory of Tours with its inspiring introduction by Fr. Seraphim Rose about the period when Christianity in the West was indistinguishable from that of the East. I was particularly interested in St. Gall and the saints of Switzerland, and was given an excellent book on the development of Christianity there by my Swiss cousin, Margreth Allgaier, who would later accompany me on some interesting trips.

Opposite: Popadija Margaret Bauman.

With my husband's encouragement, I made my first trip back to Germany and Switzerland in 2001. Since then I've expanded the visits to include Holland, Belgium, Germany and Austria. Later I was asked to write an article on the early saints of the German-speaking lands for the 2006 *St. Herman Calendar* published by the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery in Platina, California (reprinted here on p. 45). My current project is a guidebook to sites associated with some of the important saints of the German-speaking lands, which include Germany, Austria, parts of Switzerland, and small parts of France, Italy and Luxembourg.

RTE: How do you go about this? Do you read the early Lives and then fill out the picture with pilgrimage?

PDA. MARGARET: I wish it were that simple, since a well-written *Life* which was composed close to the time of the saint's actual life or is based on a reliable transmission can do a great deal to bring one close to the saint. You see, all of the original *Lives* are in Latin, which was the church language for many centuries in the West, and not that many have been translated into English. It takes a real scholar of medieval Latin to translate them, which unfortunately I am not. So I read summaries in the old versions of the Catholic Encyclopedia or Butler's *Lives of Saints* and some of the German online sources, and set off. I like to use everything at my disposal to get in touch with the whole of the saint's life, so I go to the spot and seek clues.

My first stop is always the church where the relics reside. The guidebook which most churches sell can be helpful in getting oriented, although modern editions often leave out any mention of relics. Of course, I first try to kneel down in front of the relics, to join in the prayers that have arisen from this spot over the centuries and the blessings that have come through the saint's intercession.

I also look at the artwork in the church, which can show what was passed on about the saint's life and characteristics, and can sometimes help bring out his character through the subtle interaction between the artist and the saint. For instance, artwork depicting St. Wunibald, from his grave relief to illuminated manuscripts, always shows him as a very humble man, while artwork of his older brother, the bishop St. Willibald, although also showing an inward absorption, shows him as strong and determined.

Next I try to find a good *Life* in German, if I don't already have one (usually in the local bookstore), and I try to find a good local history, since these often



give background to the hagiography and help in looking for places where events in the saint's life happened, which may still be marked and remembered in some way.

Then I follow up on the “clues” I have found, to come closer and closer to the saint and to where and how he lived his life. All of this may happen over the course of two or three trips, since I have to go home in between and read the books I have found and then say, “Oh! I wish I had known that!” That’s why I’m trying to write a guide book—so others don’t have to repeat my mistakes, and to make these places—and saints—more accessible to people who don’t read German.

Something else I have encountered is that for a number of historical and contemporary reasons places of prayer and veneration close to the relics of the saint are not always available. The relics may be completely gone; they may be in storage, museums or locked areas, or they may be present but be-

hind formidable ironwork, or in a place not conducive to prayer. Later I will mention how pilgrims can sometimes gain access.

Disruptions to Early Christianity

RTE: We think of Europe as having a very Christian past. How did this inaccessibility come about?

PDA. MARGARET: It has to do with the complex history of the German-speaking lands. With the withdrawal of Roman troops from the area along the Rhine and Danube Rivers to defend Rome shortly before its 5th-century collapse, there was a migration of largely pagan Germanic tribes into regions that had been part of the Roman Empire. Christianity had been established in these areas for several centuries, but now many churches were destroyed or allowed to deteriorate, and the continuity of word-of-mouth and written history was often disrupted.

For example, in Bregenz (now Austria) we can trace the replacement of Christianity by pagan worship. When missionaries arrived there two centuries after the Roman troops had left, they found a church that was previously dedicated



Relics of Sts. Gall, Otmar, and other saints behind ironwork in Cathedral of St. Gall, St. Gallen, Switzerland.

to St. Aurelia. Two bronze plaques of old pagan gods had been fastened to the wall, and there the local inhabitants offered sacrifices. The missionaries

rededicated the church to the saint, but only stayed three years due to the fierce opposition to Christianity. After they left we can only presume that the church was once again used for pagan offerings, until Christianity finally won out in the region.

Christianity and literacy were preserved in some of the cities of the former Roman areas where Roman church and government officials stayed behind, but the people in the surrounding areas were illiterate, often warlike, and worshipers of pagan gods. Later, traveling monks and clerics came from western France, from the cities in (present-day) Germany which had been under Rome (especially Trier), and from Ireland to settle as hermits or work as missionaries, some of whom were outstanding saints. These include St. Castor on the Moselle River; St. Goar on the Rhine; St. Suitbert (an early missionary from England to what is now Holland and northern Germany), and St. Emmeran in Bavaria.

When I looked for saints by century, there were relatively few from the 5th, 6th, and 7th centuries whose names we know. This is because wars and migrations continued, and there was also a large area (see map on p. 25) that had never been under Rome and was settled by Germanic tribes that were largely pagan. At the beginning of the eighth century there were scattered Christians throughout the German-speaking lands, but even the priests had often lapsed in their morality and were practicing a mixture of Christianity, superstition, and idol-worship, while the majority of people, especially in the areas that had never been under Rome, were openly pagan and practiced witchcraft.

Then in 719, St. Boniface and his Anglo-Saxon countrymen arrived from England to begin the great work of completing the conversion of the greater part of (present-day) Germany and upper Austria. He and his disciples built churches, established monasteries for both men and women, traveled about teaching the people, and established bishoprics. They upheld the Ecumenical Councils and a high standard of morality. Some of his disciples, such as Sts. Leoba and Walburga, and Sts. Lull, Sturm, Sola, Willibald and Wunibald, also led holy lives and are recognized as saints. Others did their work of conversion further north, so that a century before the schism of 1054 almost all of the German-speaking lands had been converted to Orthodox Christianity and there were priests, bishops, churches and monasteries to serve them.

RTE: Were the original Lives that you work with in translation written around this time?

PDA. MARGARET: Some of them were written by disciples of the saint, others were written later. As I looked for these Lives, I was also warned about another problem; this one happened after the schism. Around the time of the Crusades, many of the Lives were altered. Through mistaken piety western Christians sometimes added flowery and fantastic elements which obscured the truth of the earlier accounts. At times, they also gave life to legends that supplanted the original lives in the popular mind. For instance, if you visit the site of St. Fridolin's labors in Bad Säckingen, Germany, you will usually see him depicted as raising a dead man named Urs from the grave, so that Urs could testify in court that he had given his property to the monastery. This was not part of the original life, but was allowed to become a prominent feature of his depiction.

Then, as the West and East became more divided in belief and practice, and the problems of intertwined church and state powers called for reform, the most devastating change of all came about—the Reformation or Protestant revolution. Many churches rich in history, pageantry, beauty and holiness were desecrated—leaving them bereft of the sacraments, the resting places and relics of the saints, and their lovely decorations. They were left plain and bare. Because of their material value, some of the sacred objects were placed in museums, while others disappeared, either thrown away or occasionally taken elsewhere for safekeeping.

Surprisingly to a non-historian like myself, the Napoleonic Wars had a large effect on parts of Germany. In several regions between 1803 and 1808, the French “secularized” church property and gave it to German noblemen who had furnished troops for Napoleon's campaigns or to compensate for land annexed by France. Monasteries that had been built to commemorate saints were taken away and used for secular purposes, and the land that had brought income and food to the monasteries was also taken, forcing their dissolution. Depending on the religious leanings of the new owners, the monastery church either became a Protestant (Lutheran or Reformed) church or a Roman Catholic parish church. In the latter case, the veneration of the local saints and the preservation of their relics may have continued in an unbroken line to the present, which makes these churches real pilgrimage destinations today.



St. Fridolin's shrine: legend of raising the dead man Urs. Bad Säckingen, Germany.

Relics and Pilgrimage Sites Today

In general, as long as the German-speaking lands were part of the universal Church or remained Roman Catholic after the schism and Reformation, the graves of the saints were cared for, the lives of the saints were passed on, pilgrimages were made to the holy sites, and a sacramental life surrounded these sites.

Recently, though, modern problems have appeared: a rise in vandalism which necessitates greater security and an indifference to relics. Many reliquaries are kept locked and are not easily accessible because of the real danger of theft or harm. Also, there is a rising lack of religious faith in Western Europe, and sadly, sometimes an indifference even among Roman Catholics to relics.

For example, we met a church warden in Fulda who told us he had seen relics from churches for sale in flea markets, and had been buying them to keep them safe. In another instance, a Catholic priest at a church dedicated to St. Martin of Tours didn't know if the relics of the saint were still in a newly restored reliquary which had been brought out of storage, and didn't seem to care. At another site in Switzerland, a Benedictine priest-monk confirmed that although they still venerate the saints, he didn't think that their relics were anything special, although his monastery had an extraordinary collection, including relics that exist nowhere else.

Of course, some Catholics do treasure their relics, and finding that wonderful combination—a peaceful place of prayer near the holy relics of a saint, where the presence of God has been drawn by continual devoted prayer and church history has also been kept alive—is a wonderful treat. You can find it in Bad Säckingen in the St. Fridolin Church; in Eichstätt in the Benedictine women’s monastery dedicated to St. Walburga; in the small town of Scheer on the Danube River before the shrine dedicated to Sts. Walburga, Wunibald and Willibald; in the crypt of the Holy Cross Church in Donauwörth before an enshrined piece of the True Cross; and in the tourist town of St. Goar on the Rhine, where unexpectedly there is a shrine with a small relic of the saint just as you go in the door of the church.¹

In addition to this sampling of “perfect” places, in some places you can go into a crypt, treasury or other special shrine if you make arrangements in advance. In many places the relics which are usually in safekeeping are brought out in procession and for veneration on the saint’s feast day. Other places, such as the town of Scheer, have shown that it is possible to keep their treasures safe and still provide for everyday devotion. There, they have beautiful duplicates in the church of the three reliquaries for the Anglo-Saxon sibling saints which they possess. The relics, however, are in a room directly behind the wall in their original reliquaries. The originals are brought out on their feast days.



4th-century Roman gravestone showing Christian and pagan elements. Kaiseraugst, Switzerland.

RTE: Do the German-speaking Orthodox go on pilgrimage to these places? I know that there has been a revival of interest in old pilgrimage places such as Brittany by French Catholics, and there are even Orthodox pilgrims coming from as far away as Russia.

PDA. MARGARET: Most of the Orthodox who have settled in the German-speaking countries are not aware that there are pre-schism saints whose lives and posthumous intercessions have hallowed the ground where they

¹ The main relics of St. Goar are in a church in Koblenz, rather hidden.

live, and that these saints are Orthodox. But a few people are spreading this knowledge and encouraging local pilgrimage.

RTE: Can you tell us now about your own pilgrimages?

PDA. MARGARET: On my first trip to Europe to investigate the early Church, which I made in 2001, I was able to go to Basel, Switzerland (my mother's hometown), a beautiful old city on the Rhine River where France, Germany and Switzerland come together. I was first introduced to its charms as a 20-year-old student, when a cousin gave me a walking tour of its interesting old houses, and I spent the night in his parents' home on the Rhine River, listening to the foghorns on the barges that had come all the way from Rotterdam.

Now, many years later, my initial stop was at the Münster (former cathedral) next to the Rhine, whose colorful roof shows up in most pictures of the city. It was formerly a Catholic church dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St. Pantalus, the first bishop of Basel, but now it is a Reformed Church and I found it disappointingly plain. I saw this starkness over and over again in Zürich, Romainmotier, and other places—the Reform movement of the 16th century had stripped the church bare of everything dear to the heart of a traditional Christian. I didn't expect icons, but where were the frescoes? the statues? the relics? Even, who was the patron saint of the church?

My search for holy sites led me to another church in Basel—this one converted to a historical museum (the Historical Museum on Barfüsser Platz). Here was everything that had once been in the churches, even a number of beautiful reliquaries! Later I learned that in the beginning of the 19th century, all of the relics that had landed in the Basel treasury after the Reformation had been taken out of their cases and the archivist was told to either throw them in the Rhine River or to burn them! He couldn't bring himself to do either, so he carefully labeled and stored them. Later he gave them to a monastery outside of town, where they were arranged and decorated and many of them can be seen today. So the museum has the empty cases, and the monastery is honoring the real treasures—the precious bones of the saints!

Mariastein Monastery and the Basel Relics

In 2009 I went with my Swiss cousin and a young friend to Mariastein, the Benedictine Monastery which had received the Basel relics. We took a

streetcar from the Basel train station to the outlying town of Flüh, and just before we got out, had a friendly exchange with a monk on how to find the monastery. A lovely half-hour hike uphill in the rain led us to the monastery church. On both the north and south altars were displays of many relics, each labeled with the saint's name. Since I couldn't read all of the names from where I was standing, I asked a monk if these were the relics from Basel and if there was a listing of them. Before I knew it we were talking with another monk who was their historian—the very man we had met in the streetcar *and* the monk who had written the article about the relics that had brought me there! He showed us materials from the archives and gave me a very useful book. He also showed us the beautifully handwritten list of all the Basel relics, signed by the abbot who had received them in 1835. Among them were relics of St. Martin, St. Ursula, St. Pantalus, St. Fridolin, St. Verena, and the Apostle Philip, plus many others (a total of 91).

By the way, the Mariastein Monastery is chiefly known as a great pilgrimage place to the Mother of God, to commemorate a miracle that happened several hundred years ago when a little boy fell off the cliff where the monastery is located and was saved in the arms of the Virgin. A small pilgrimage chapel commemorates this event.

RTE: Wonderful. What other sites do you particularly remember?

PDA. MARGARET: On my first visit in 2001, I was also able to visit Kaiseraugst (a former Roman town near Basel with the oldest Christian gravestone in Switzerland and a fourth-century baptismal church), Zürich (whose patron saints are the early 4th century martyrs, Sts. Felix and Regula); two ancient former monasteries (Peyenne and Romainmotier), and the active Monas-



Patron Saints of Zürich, Switzerland. Icon presented to the Grossmünster (Great Minster) by the Orthodox Clergy.

tery of St. Maurice, the African soldier-martyr who died there around 300 with other soldiers of the Theban Legion. I also went across the Rhine to Bad Säckingen, Germany, where my love for the early Irish missionary St. Fridolin was ignited, had my first visit to St. Gallen, and finally tacked on a special trip to Bavaria to visit the resting place of St. Walburga, an early Anglo-Saxon missionary-abbess who helped St. Boniface establish Christianity in the interior of Germany.

Zürich: Sts. Felix and Regula

Later, I went on to Zürich, where I visited the “Grossmünster,” the original burial site of the patron saints of the city, Sts. Felix and Regula, who were early martyrs associated with the Theban Legion. Here I was especially shocked at the ravages of the Reformation. I learned that the Reformer Zwingli had gotten rid of the chalices, monstrances, and statues; thrown out the relics of the saints; painted over all of the beautiful frescoes; and torn down the altar tables in this and six other churches to build himself a pulpit from which to preach! The Swiss are now conscious of their losses, at least in the realm of art history, and are trying to uncover the frescoes in the churches and display the remaining church objects in museums.

Most of the relics from these churches would be gone for good and the remembrance of the saints reduced to a cultural-historical significance, or even legend, except for two events which, by the grace of God, happened in recent times to bring some veneration of the patron saints of Zürich back to the city, despite the Protestant “purging.”

While browsing through a bookstore, I learned that in 1950 a Catholic church was founded in their names, and relics were brought to it from Andermatt. These relics in Andermatt had been rescued at the time of Zwingli, when all the relics were thrown together into the “bone house.” Those of the city’s patron saints, Felix and Regula, however, were taken for safekeeping to this small town by a local man who was in Zürich at the time.

The second event took place in 2004, when all of the Orthodox jurisdictions in town, including four Chalcedonian (Russian, Serbian, Greek, and Romanian) as well as five Oriental Orthodox churches, held a joint vespers service at the Grossmünster on the eve of the feast of Sts. Felix and Regula, and then presented the church with an icon which had been painted of the saints. These saints are, of course, the “common property” of all Christians, as they were martyred around the year 300. Tradition says that they were

members of the Theban Legion who were decapitated in Zürich and then picked up their heads and walked from the site of the later Wasserkirche (“Water Church”) to that of the Grossmünster. This icon now hangs in the stairwell leading down to the former burial chapel of the martyrs.

Orthodox Christians in Switzerland seem to be especially active in recognizing the early saints as Orthodox and promoting their veneration. This vespers service has now become a yearly event, and an association of Orthodox churches (the AGOK) has grown out of it. Newly-reposed Bishop Ambrosius of Lausanne (Russian Church Abroad) also collected information about Swiss saints and wrote a service to them. I have since seen pictures of other icons of the patron saints of Zürich, including a fresco in the Serbian Church in Zürich, which means that the Orthodox are drawing attention to them, for both Orthodox and non-Orthodox.

RTE: And how about Cologne? We always hear that the relics of the Three Magi are there.

PDA. MARGARET: As one of the original Roman cities along the Rhine (founded in 50 A.D.), Cologne is a very rich place for relics of early saints and for early churches—despite the WWII bombing,

it still has ten Romanesque churches!² Until the end of the twelfth century, the spiritual center of Cologne was the St. Gereon Church where relics of martyrs of the Theban Legion³ are still honored, and before which several



The Irish missionary St. Gall, Enlightener of Switzerland. Icon from St. Spyridon Skete.

2 The Allied forces bombed Cologne in 262 separate raids, destroying the entire city center with saturation bombing and reducing the population by 95%. That anything was saved is indeed a miracle.

3 The Theban Legion is a legion of Roman soldiers from Thebes (Egypt) who were Christians serving at the end of the third century. They were martyred for their faith in the mountains of Switzerland in the town of Agaunum, now known as St. Maurice. Their leader, St. Maurice, and two other officers, Sts. Exuperantus and Candidus, are the only ones known by name. Other units of the Theban Legion are believed to have been stationed in what is now Italy, Switzerland, and along the Rhine in present-day Germany. Martyrs from these units include Sts. Felix and Regula of Zürich, Switzerland, mentioned above, and St. Gereon and his companions in Cologne, Germany.

kings were anointed. Then in 1164 Cologne acquired the relics of the Three Magi, and the magnificent Cologne Cathedral was built to house the relics, eclipsing all of the other churches in size and importance.

The relics had been in a church outside of Milan, Italy, since the 4th century, and before that are said to have been in Constantinople. How they came to Constantinople is the subject of legend: one says that the kings found their way to India and were baptized there by the Apostle Thomas; another says that their graves were found (probably in Persia) by St. Helen, who brought their relics to Constantinople to the Church of Hagia Sophia.

When the shrine to the Magi was last opened and examined (in 1864), it contained the almost-complete skeletons of three bodies—a youth, a middle-aged man, and an old man, as well as the relics of three other saints. It also contained fabric that on several counts is shown to be very ancient, with similar types being anywhere from the time of Christ to the 4th century.

Many years ago I happened to be in Cologne on Three Kings' Day (January 6), and joined a long line of worshippers in the Cathedral to venerate the skulls of the kings (one end of the shrine opens up for this). I have read that many healings are associated with prayers at the shrine, especially healings from epilepsy.

Sts. Gall and Fridolin: Two Irish Missionary-Saints

RTE: If one can speak of favorites, who are yours among the saints of German-speaking lands?

PDA. MARGARET: I have many, but two I dearly love are the Irish missionaries St. Gall and St. Fridolin, who were responsible for converting the Alemanni in northern Switzerland and southwest Germany. I keep going back to where both of them lived, to venerate their relics and to try to reconstruct their lives.

St. Gall was a companion of the great Irishman St. Columbanus, who founded monasteries in France and lived there for many years until the political climate changed and he had to move. When St. Columbanus went to Italy in 612, St. Gall stayed behind in the region south of Lake Constance (present-day Switzerland), where he founded a hermitage with a little chapel and several huts around it deep in the woods, near a waterfall of the Steinach River that fed into a lake full of fish. (You can still see the waterfall behind

the cathedral built over his original chapel; the lake has been reduced to a pond, but is still full of fish!)

St. Gall lived a very humble life, turning down offers to be bishop of Constance and the abbot of St. Columbanus' former monastery in France, as well as giving away riches he had received for healing the possessed daughter of a local duke. He made friends with the simple people of the mountains around, gathered a few disciples, and trained and promoted a native man as bishop instead of himself. He is credited with converting the region, and many miracles were recorded after his death. This is the saint who started me on my search, and who came into my mind at odd times in America—as if he was encouraging me to return to Europe and continue my pilgrimages. I've been able to venerate his relics in the Cathedral of St. Gallen, and to visit several other spots associated with his life.

Once I decided to experience what the woods were like where he first searched for a spot for his hermitage. I took a train to a place between Arbon on Lake Constance, from where he had set out, and St. Gallen, the large city that sprang up around his monastery.

There, I got out at a stop in the woods between the two and began walking. It was a sunny spring day with dappled light making its way through the tree-tops, not a soul was nearby, and I imagined St. Gall setting off from Arbon after spending all night in prayer, carrying his bag with relics and trusting in God to lead him to his new home. I felt very close to him.



St. Fridolin, Enlightener of the Upper Rhine. Alexandr Stoljarov, Iconographer.

After this idyllic morning, perhaps the saint wanted me to find out what his trek was really like. My plan had been to have a little walk in the woods, then catch a train at the next station to St. Gallen. But I was not able to cross the tracks to the station, and had to keep walking for a very long time through the woods and then through farmland. I didn't see anyone and didn't know where I was. Finally I encountered a man who told me that if I went even farther ahead, I could catch a bus into town. So my experience ended up being a little more like the saint's own—he had hiked from dawn until three in the afternoon—except that I had on the wrong shoes and ended up with very sore feet! Nevertheless I was rewarded with a visit into the crypt to venerate his relics, which is rare, as one usually has to make arrangements in advance, preferably as part of a group.

Another time, I was returning to a relative's home after visiting St. Gallen and got off the bus one stop too soon. I ended up lost in the woods as it was getting dark, and began to panic. Thinking about St. Gall and how at home he was in the woods (he even banished a bear to the mountains so that his hermitage would be safe), I calmed down and eventually found my way back.

Since today's city of St. Gallen bears little relationship to how the area was when he lived there, all of my experiences—finding his waterfall with the fish and the place where he tripped over a root and said: "This is it! I have found the spot!", and seeing the shore of Lake Constance near Arbon, where he landed after rowing from Bregenz to begin the Swiss mission—helped form that living picture I spoke of earlier.

The other Irish missionary-saint I "met" on my first trip back to Europe was St. Fridolin. He seems to have come to mainland Europe in the 6th - 7th centuries, and his life is fascinating. After an early education in Ireland, he was ordained to the priesthood, and already in his native land he was a wandering preacher who was so well-loved that when he left for the continent, hundreds of people followed him to the sea to bid him farewell. He gave them a final sermon on the shore, and left for Gaul (present-day France).

Unlike many wandering Irish holy men who preferred to live as hermits, St. Fridolin was a missionary wherever he went. He traveled around Gaul, preaching to those who had not yet become Christian. Eventually he arrived in Poitiers at the ruined Monastery of St. Hilary, which had been overrun in 409 during the barbarian migrations. Here St. Hilary appeared to him twice, once to prophesy that St. Fridolin would restore the monastery and reinstate services there, and later to tell him that he would found a monastery on an

island on the Rhine River. Both of these prophecies came true. St. Fridolin also founded a monastery and two churches in what is now the Alsace region of France and another church in Switzerland, all dedicated to St. Hilary and blessed with a portion of his relics.

When St. Fridolin finally found the island on the Rhine (which was granted to him by King Clovis) it was uninhabited except as a place for grazing cattle. As he began to explore it, local people thought that he was trespassing and beat him soundly with whips—not once but several times. Saint Fridolin finally had to appeal to King Clovis, and the king's support (probably with armed soldiers) made it possible for him to begin clearing land for a church. His missionary endeavors soon bore fruit and before long most of the local people were won over.

However, there was still a group who fiercely opposed him, and when the king died they tried to take back the island. Through fervent prayer and an inspiration to change the course of the Rhine by putting pine trees in the riverbed, the island was separated from the mainland by a rushing stream instead of shallow water. Saint Fridolin's former enemies eventually repented and begged for his prayers. In time he built a monastery for women, to which the local people sent their daughters. The first nun was said to be the daughter of a woman who had at first fiercely condemned the saint, but later came to love and respect him.



Cornelia Delkeskamp-Hayes and Pda. Margaret Bauman.

I first experienced Bad Säckingen, the site of St. Fridolin's labors, with another cousin, when we explored the Old Town in the rain, prayed and lit candles in the church, and were fortunate enough to be allowed into the crypt. We also found a wonderful bookstore with St. Fridolin's complete *Life*. The holy presence before the relics was so special that I had an icon painted of him by Alexander Stoljarov, a Russian iconographer living in Germany (see page 36). This is one of the places where the veneration of a saint has been kept alive to the present.

If you visit the town now, you may wonder, as I did, where the island went. In the 19th century the branch of the river which flowed between the island and the mainland was filled in, and the island is now the "Old Town" of Bad Säckingen. The town has its own charms—statues and fountains; beautiful flower plantings; the interesting "Old Town," and an incredible covered wooden bridge across the Rhine with window boxes of red geraniums along it (see cover).

A few years later, by God's grace, I had an unexpected chance to visit St. Fridolin again when I was offered a place to stay in nearby Stein, a town in Switzerland that is connected to Bad Säckingen by Europe's longest covered bridge. Twice, I was able to walk to St. Fridolin's church. The second time, although my hostess was waiting for me, I couldn't bear to leave that intimate chapel and the powerful feeling near his relics. Just as we were ready to depart, a group was led into the crypt and we were allowed to join in. Here I saw where his coffin had originally been located, and also where it had been walled in for protection against Napoleon's soldiers.

RTE: You do your research very thoroughly. Are those you've mentioned here the majority of early saints?

PDA. MARGARET: No, the saints and relics we've just spoken of are only a portion of those I've investigated. Also, there are many others that I've heard of, but have not yet had a chance to look into. Along the winding Moselle River with its vineyards and castles are the scenes of the life of St. Castor in Karden; the incredibly rich city of Trier—which warrants a whole book to tell of its early saints, its relics brought from the East, and the traces of the lives of Sts. Constantine and Helen; nearby Echternach (Luxembourg) with its relics of St. Willibrord, Enlightener of the Netherlands, and beautiful illuminated manuscripts; and Koblenz, where the relics of Sts. Castor and Goar are now. Along the middle Rhine are the former Roman cities of Bonn, Xanten

and Mainz, with relics of early martyrs and bishops, old churches, and rich history. Then there is northern Germany—Bavaria—Austria—other parts of Switzerland—in other words, every place we might like to visit as tourists also has its holy sites and relics, if we know where to look.

My friend Cornelia Delkeskamp-Hayes, who is also interviewed in this issue, has compiled an ever-growing data file of the relics of Germany and neighboring lands, containing hundreds of towns and cities with their relics and saints. She has helped me a great deal and we have had some exciting trips together where our interests overlap.

Practical Pilgrimage Advice

RTE: Pda. Margaret, would you like to pass on any practical advice about making a pilgrimage that you've learned along the way?

PDA. MARGARET: I started my research in a very naive way. It was full of adventure and sometimes the thrill of detective work or an archeological dig, but I missed things because I didn't know what to look for or couldn't get into interesting places. If you are investigating the saints don't let that stop you—you can never tell what might happen if you keep pursuing a site, relics or a Life. I'm sure that the saints are pleased that we are interested in their witness, and they do help.

On my first visit to Eichstätt, where St. Willibald worked and where the relics of St. Walburga now reside, I arrived with no room reservation, late on a Saturday afternoon, hoping that I could stay in the monastery guesthouse that the nuns run for the general public. I was wrong! It turned out to be a long holiday weekend, the guesthouse was booked, and the town was full of German vacationers. A nun kindly pointed me in the direction of several small hotels, so I trundled off, dragging my suitcase. After two or three unsuccessful inquiries, I found an inn with a free room where I went and collapsed from nervous tension, eating the bread and cheese I had bought before the stores closed. The next day I saw the same nun again (it turned out she was the mother superior.) She asked me if I had found a place, and told me she had been praying for me all evening.

A couple of experiences like that strengthened my faith, but also taught me to book rooms in advance. There often aren't many church staff and European church treasuries containing relics can often only be visited by appointment.

RTE: You've been on pilgrimage to Europe several times now. Do you sometimes have a sense that the saints themselves are leading you?

PDA. MARGARET: Yes, I certainly have, as I mentioned in the introduction, my experiences of St. Gall in the woods and at other times. I have also had a number of earthly "angels" who were inspired to help me, for which I am very grateful. One I especially remember was during a long wait in Regensburg for a train to Munich. I had to make a train connection in Munich, but it became later and later and the train still hadn't arrived. Suddenly a nice



Sr. Martha and Cross Reliquary, Holy Cross Church, Donauwörth, Germany.

middle-aged German businessman told me that there was another route to Munich, took me quickly in tow, and put me in the exact train car I needed with full instructions on what to do!

Another day, I was in a small-town bookstore looking for the life of a local saint, St. Leoba. They had nothing, but the manager suddenly remembered a book that had been written years before by a nun. He called the local Catholic church office, where the secretary found one copy left in the files, collected a nominal

amount of money from me, and mailed it the following day to my next stop! It was an exceedingly helpful book.

Also, missed trains or schedule problems can be frustrating, but on pilgrimage they often seem to be guidance from above. With patience you may be rewarded with something you never expected. For example, once when we found ourselves without transport to a remote holy site near Donauwörth, we decided to visit the town's Holy Cross Church instead. We walked from the train station, along a river, and up through the woods until the church appeared. Inside were an amazing number of relics, and in the crypt's pil-

grimage chapel was a large piece of the True Cross, given to the local duke, Mangold I, by Emperor Romanus III when Mangold visited Constantinople in 1029! On his return Mangold built a chapel for it, and later a larger church and monastery. The Cross has been honored there ever since. Praying at this holy spot was one of the most profound and far-reaching moments of my life, and I keep being drawn back there.

A few months later, I was back in America when my local church celebrated one of the feasts of the Cross. As I venerated the decorated cross, I remembered the Cross I had venerated in Germany, and the feeling of being there was very strong again. This happened more than once on feast days of the Cross. When I visited Donauwörth again, a few years later, the Cross was not in the crypt. A nun of the church told us that the Cross is only displayed at certain times, but she opened up the sacristy to take the Cross out for us. She even took the piece of wood out of its housing, and let us kiss it. Later, while I was in church on another feast of the Cross, my lips began to tingle, and I thought: “These lips have kissed the True Cross!”

This clearly had nothing to do with me, but with the power of the Cross itself. It not only proved to me that the piece of the Cross we venerated was the same one that St. Helena had found and which raised a dead man to life, but it strengthened my belief in pilgrimages to these holy places to venerate relics left behind by our Lord and His holy ones.

Native German Orthodox Saints

RTE: The saints you’ve spoken about are all missionaries from elsewhere—Romans, Anglo-Saxons, Irishmen, and even Africans. Are there any native German saints?

PDA. MARGARET: I am often asked this question, and it seems to be asking not only about saints from a Germanic background (which the Anglo-Saxons certainly were), but those who were born in today’s German-speaking territories. Because so much of the work of converting Germanic peoples came rather late, there are fewer native pre-schism saints among them. Those I know about include St. Otmar of the Alemanni, who turned St. Gall’s hermitage into a thriving monastery of native monks, until his enemies falsely accused him and he died in exile; St. Sturm, a Bavarian who was trained under St. Boniface, lived as a hermit, and then founded the famous Fulda Monastery; and St. Liudgar, a Frisian who was an outstanding missionary to

both Frisians and Saxons in the north of Germany.

I know that a saint having the same background as yourself helps you to make a connection with him, and through him with God. Still, there is a broader way of looking at this subject. The first 1000 years of Christianity were characterized by great movement and fluidity among peoples—and relics—and this was the working of the Holy Spirit. People were going to Jerusalem and Constantinople and bringing back the inspiration of the apostles and the influence of eastern desert monasticism to the West. Along with this came the witness of martyrs, the relics of saints and apostles, the living presence of pieces from the True Cross and even a nail from the Cross (brought to Trier by St. Helena), as well as the missionaries and teachers of various races and backgrounds who were on fire for Christ and who opened up the heavenly world to those who could see and hear. This is still spiritually present for us to tap into, and I believe that ultimately it is not a special Germanic tradition of sainthood, but this universal Christianity that we must work to uncover in the German-speaking lands. ✦