

**St. Hedwig von Andechs (Jadwiga from Silesia)¹
(Bavaria-Germany/Silesia/Poland) (1174-1243)**

*Nursed the sick, including lepers
Founded the hospital in Wrocław
Depicted nursing a sick man in bed
in the Altarpiece commissioned for the
church of St. Francis of Assisi in Prague's Old Town²
Duchess of Silesia, Greater Poland & High Duchess consort of Poland--*

St. Hedwig (1174-1243) was born around 1174 at the Andechs Castle in the Duchy of Bavaria (current day southern Germany) to Count Berthold IV of Andechs, margrave of Carniola and Istria and his second wife Agnes of Wettin. She had three sisters (Agnes, Gertrude, Matilda) and four brothers (Ekbert, Berthold, Otto, Henry).

Her brother Ekbert became the Bishop of Bamberg and Berthold, Bishop of Aquileia.³ Hedwig was the Aunt of St. Elizabeth of Hungary⁴ through her sister Gertrude. Her niece, Elizabeth (1207-1231), nursed the sick, founded several hospitals, was an early third order Franciscan and a large order of nursing sisters took her name (Congregation of the Sisters of St. Elizabeth-CSSE) founded by Blessed Maria Luisa Merkert (1817-1872).⁵ Hundreds of these religious sisters were martyred by Soviets as they retreated through Germany and Poland following World War II.^{6 7}



Hedwig was educated at the monastery of Kitzingen. In 1186 at the age of 12, Hedwig married Henry of Silesia. Henry was 18 year old and the son of Bolesław, the Duke of Silesia. Hedwig and Henry had six children three girls (Agnes, Sophia, Gertrude) and four boys (Bolesław, Henry II, Conrad). Only Gertrude and Henry II survived into adulthood. Henry II was killed in the Battle of Legnica at age 45. Gertrude entered religious life and became a Cistercian nun and Abbess of Trzebnica (In German: Trebnitz, In Czech: Třebnice), a monastery established by her parents.

Despite her societal advancement, Hedwig continued to live a humble lifestyle, often dressing in second-hand clothing. She kept few personal possessions and was known to eat simple food and read aloud from the Bible at meals.⁸

Upon Henry II's father's death in 1202, Henry succeeded his father as Duke of Silesia.

At the instance of his saintly wife, the duke then founded at his own expense, and on ground donated by himself the convent of the Cistercian nuns at Trzebnica (1202), and generously endowed it. The first nuns came from Bamberg and took possession of their new monastery early in 1203. The first abbess said to have been Petrusa, succeeded by BL. Gertrude, a daughter of Henry and Hedwig, who at an early age had been betrothed to Otto von Wittelsbach. After he murdered the German King Philip of Swabia (1208), the betrothal was annulled and Gertrude entered the Abbey of Trzebnica (before 1212), where she later became abbess.⁹

On the suggestion of Hedwig, after the birth of this last child, she and her husband led a virgin life (1209), and pronounced a vow of chastity before the Bishop of Breslau. Duke Henry took the tonsure and allowed his beard to grow, like the Cistercian lay brothers (whence his sobriquet of "the Bearded"). From this time forward Hedwig spent much of her time at the Abbey of Trzebnica (Trzebnica).¹⁰

Hedwig and Henry founded numerous monasteries, hospitals, and churches. The Catholic Encyclopedia records:¹¹

Henry encouraged to the utmost the spread of the more highly developed civilization existing in the German territories adjoining his to the west, so that Silesia became German in Language and customs...

...It was chiefly through the monasteries that German civilization was spread in Silesia. Henry and Hedwig endowed munificently the Cistercian monastery of Leubus, the Premonstratensian monastery of St. Vincent, and the foundation of Canons of St. Augustine at Breslau. The following monasteries were established: the Augustinian priory of Naumburg on the Bober (1217), later transferred to Sagan, the Cistercian monastery of Heinrichau (1227), and the priory of the Augustinian Canons at Kamenz (1210). St. Hedwig brought the Dominicans to Bunzlau and Breslau, the Franciscans to Goldberg (1212) and later to Krossen. The Templars established a house at Klein-Oels. Henry was the founder of the Hospital of the Holy Ghost at Breslau (1214), and Hedwig tended with disinterested charity the leper women in the hospital at Neumarkt.

According to the New Advent Catholic Encyclopedia, it was together that Henry and Elizabeth founded the Hospital of the Holy Ghost at Breslau, capital of Silesia. (In 1945, following World War II, Breslau became known as Wrocław, Poland.). Hedwig also provided nursing care to women with leprosy at the leprosarium in Neumarkt in Silesia (modern town of Środa Śląska, Poland)¹² Hedwig led a most devoted life, looking after the poor and sick and founding hospitals for them.¹³

“Hedwig had many trials and tribulations. In the year 1227 her husband, with Duke Lesko of Sandomir, was treacherously set upon by Swantopolk, Duke of Pomerania, and severely wounded. Hedwig immediately hastened to Gonsawa, where the bloody deed had taken place, to care for her husband. Lesko had been killed, and war now broke out between Henry of Silesia and Conrad of Masovia over the possession of Cracow. Conrad was defeated, but succeeded in surprising Henry in a church attending Divine service and led him captive to Plock (1229). Hedwig forthwith went to her husband’s assistance, and her very appearance made such an impression on Conrad of Masovia that he released the duke.”¹⁴ In 1231 he became the Duke of Greater Poland and the next year High Duke at Krakow.

Henry died in 1238 leaving Hedwig a widow at age 64. He was buried at Trzebnica Abbey, a Cistercian monastery of nuns which he had established in 1202 at Hedwig’s request. Faithful to God, Hedwig responded to her beloved husband’s death with faith reportedly saying “*Would you oppose the will of God/ Our lives are His.*”



St. Hedwig providing nursing care to the sick. Altarpiece commissioned in 1482 for the church of St Francis of Assisi in Prague's Old town; On display in the National Gallery in Prague

After he husband died, Hedwig entered the monastery of Trzebnica where her daughter Gertrude was abbess and donned the grey habit of a lay sister. She devoted herself to prayer, charity and service.¹⁵

For the next five years, she lived as a Cistercian lay sister, but did not take any religious vows so that she could still use her wealth to support a variety of charitable efforts. She also continued to assist the poor and often carried around a small statue of Our Lady which she used to bless those who were ill. Near the end of her life, she spent much of her time in meditation and prayer, and occasionally sought solitude for this task by locking herself in the Abbey chapel overnight.¹⁶



St. Hedwig blessing the ill with a statue of Our Lady Source:²¹

Hedwig devoted herself unreservedly to exercises of mortification and piety as well as to works of charity.¹⁷ She gave aid to colleges and to religious persons dwelling within or outside monasteries, to widows and orphans, to the weak and the feeble, to lepers and those bound in chains or imprisoned, to travelers and needy women nursing infants. She allowed no one who came to her for help to go away uncomforted.

Hedwig died at the Monastery of Trzebnica on October 15, 1243.¹⁸ She was buried at the church attached to the monastery. Hedwig was canonized by Pope Clement IV on 26 March 1267.¹⁹ She is known as the patron saint of Silesia, Bavarian House of Andechs, the Archdiocese of Wrocław, and the Diocese of Görlitz. (Memorial: October 16).

“Would you oppose the will of God?

Our lives are His.

*We ought to find our comfort in whatever He is pleased to ordain,
whether as to our own death, or as to that of our friends.”*



St. Hedwig bathing women with leprosy. Source: ²¹



St. Hedwig feeding patients and the poor. Source: ²¹

The
following is from the original Reverend Alban Butler's Lives of Saints (1883) republished in
2020 by Loreto Publications:²⁰
Saint Hedwiges or Avoice
Widow
Duchess of Poland

From her exact life extant in Surius, and D'Andilly, Saints Illustr: See also Chromer, Hist. 1.7, 8: Dugloss, Hist. Polonia, I.6 et 7 and F. Raderus, Bavaria, Sancta, t.1, p. 147. A.D. 1243.



Source: St. Hedwig - Illustration, Wood, Ronsaville, Harlin, Inc., Annapolis MD

The father of this saint was Bertold III of Andechs, marquis of Meran, count of Tirol, and prince (or duke) of Carinthia and Istria,^a as he is styled in the Chronicle of Andechs, and in the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary.^b Her mother was Agnes, daughter of the count of Rotletchs. St. Hedwiges had three sisters and four brothers. Her eldest sister, Agnes, was married to Philip Augustus, king of France; Gertrude, the second, to Andrew, king of Hungary, by whom she had St. Elizabeth; the third was abbess of Lutzingen in Franconia. As to her brothers, Bertold died patriarch of Aquileia, and Elebert, bishop of Bamberg: Henry and Otho divided between them their father's principalities, and became renowned generals. St. Hedwiges, by a distinguishing effect of the divine mercy in her favor, was from her cradle formed to virtue by the example and lessons of her devout mother, and of those that were place about her. In her infancy she discovered no marks of levity, and all her inclinations were turned to piety and devotion. She was placed very young in the monastery of Lutzingen, in Franconia, and only taken thence, when twelve years old, to marry Henry, duke of Silesia, descended for the dukes of Glogau in that country; to which match she only consented out of compliance with the will of her parents. In

this state, by the fidelity with which she acquitted herself of all her respective duties towards God,

^a Chromer; (1.7,) Baillet, and some others, style him duke of Carinthia, marquis of Moravia, etc. But Moravia, which as appears from Bertius, (Rerum German,) was at that time possessed by another family, is substituted by mistake for Meran. The Town of Meran, situated near the castle of Tirol, from which that name was afterwards given to the county, was a famous principality created before the reign of Frederic Barbarossa; by failure of heirs male, its dominions were afterwards divided between the Venetians, the dukes of Havana, and Austria, the lord of Nuremberg, and other neighboring princes. The castle of Andechs (now called the Holy Mountain, on account of the great number of saints' bodies there interred) is situated opposite to Diessen, (probably Strabo's Damasia,) now famous for a monastery of Regular Canons of St. Austin, in part of the ancient Vindelicia, now in Bavaria. The most religious and illustrious family of the counts of Andech is famous in martyrologies of Bavaria and Austria for the great number of saints it has produced: as, B. Rathard, a most pious priest who first built the church of St. George at Diessen, in the reign of Louis Debonnaire, in 850. Batho, now called Rasso, count or governor of Eastern Bavaria or Austria, celebrated for his extraordinary piety and devotion, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, many religious foundations, and several glorious victories over the barbarians, who from Pannonia invaded the eastern and southern provinces of Germany. He died on the 17th of June, 954. St. Otho, bishop of Bamberg, who by his zealous preaching and missions, converted a considerable part of Pomerania to the faith. He died on the 5th of July, 1189. (See his life written by one who was his contemporary, in Canisius, Antiq. Lect. T. 2 and Gretzer, I. de Sanctiis Bumbergensibus.) This saint was son to Bertold III, count of Andechs. His sister St. Mechtildes was abbess of Diessen. (See her life by Engel hard, abbot of Lanchaim, in Canis. Lect. Antiqu. T. 5; also Chronicon Andescense, et Chronicon Hirsaugite.) St. Hedwiges and St. Elizabeth of Hungary (Nov 19) are of this family. Bertold III is called by some authors marquis, by others, count of Maran; the title of margrave, or marquis, for a governor or prince of marshes, or frontier provinces, was at that time seldom made use of.

^b See Lazius and Raderus, t. 3 passim.

her husband, her children, and her family, she was truly the courageous woman described by the wise man,^c who is to be sought from the utmost boundaries of the earth; making it her study in all things only to please God, and to sanctify her own soul and her household, she directed all her views and actions to this great end. With her husband's free consent she always passed holy days, fast days, and all seasons of devotion in continence. She bore her husband three sons, Henry, Conrad, and Boleslaw; and three daughters, Agnes, Sophia and Gertrude. After the birth of her sixth child, she engaged her husband to agree to a mutual vow of perpetual continence, which they made in the presence of the bishop of the place; from which time they never met but in public places. Her husband faithfully kept this vow for thirty years that he lived afterwards during which time he never wore any gold, silver, or purple, and never shaved his beard; from which circumstance he was surnamed Henry the Bearded; and so he is constantly called by Dlugoss, Chromer, and other Polish and German historians.

The nobility of Greater Poland having expelled their duke Ladislas Otonis, conferred on Henry that principality in 1233. Hedwiges endeavored by all means in her power to dissuade him from accepting that offer; but was not able to prevail. Henry marched thither with an army, and quietly took possession of Poland, and though Boleslas the Pious was duke of Krakow and Sandomir, both he and some other lesser princes of the country stood so much in awe of Henry's superior power, as never to dare to have any contest with him. From that time, he is styled duke of Poland. Out of partial fondness he was once desirous to leave his dominions to his second son, Conrad; but Hedwiges supported the cause of Henry, which was that of justice. The two brothers, with their factions, came to an open rupture, and notwithstanding their mother's desire to reconcile them, a great battle was fought, in which Henry entirely routed his younger brother's army, who died soon after in retirement and penance. This happened several years before the death of their father, and was one of those crosses by which the duchess learned more bitterly to deplore the miseries and blindness of the world, and more perfectly to disengage her heart from its slavery. Whether in prosperity or adversity, her whole comfort was in God, and in the exercises of religion. The duke, at her persuasion, and upon her yielding into his hands her whole dower for this purpose, founded the great monastery of Cistercian nuns at Trzebnica, three miles from Breslaw [capital of Silesia now modern day Wrocław, Poland] the capital of Silesia; upon which he settled the town of Trzebnica, and other estates, endowing it for the maintenance of one thousand persons, of which, in the first foundation, one hundred were nuns; the rest were young ladies of reduced families, who were to be here educated in piety, and afterwards provided with competent portions to marry advantageously in the world; or, if they were inclined to a monastic state, they were at liberty to profess it in this or in any other nunnery. This building was begun in 1203, and was carried on fifteen years without interruption, during which time all malefactors in Silesia, instead of other punishments, were condemned to work at it, and the severity of their servitude was proportioned to their crimes. The monastery was finished and the church dedicated in 1219. The duchess practiced in her palace greater austerities than those of the most rigid monks, fasted and watched in prayer, and wherever she travelled, had always thirteen poor persons with her, whom she maintained, in honor of Christ and his apostles, waiting upon them herself upon her knees at table, where they were served with good meat, before she took her own coarse refection. She often washed the feet and kissed the ulcers of lepers, and having an extreme desire to hear that amiable sentence from Christ at the last day; I was in prison, and you visited me, she exhausted her revenues in relieving the necessitous. The simplicity which she observed in her dress while she lived with her husband showed, that if respect to him and his court obliged her to wear decent apparel, she was yet an enemy to vain or gaudy ornaments, which amuse a great part of her sex, and much more to all decoration and artifices of dress, with which many ladies study to set themselves off to advantage; a certain mark of vanity, or a pleasure they take in themselves, and a dangerous desire of pleasing others. This passion, which banished from the breast where it reigns the spirit of Christ, and his gospel, cherishes the root of many vices, and without design spreads snares to entangle and destroy unwary souls, cannot find place in one whose conduct is regulated by, and whose heart is penetrated with, the spirit of Christian modesty.

^c Prov. 30:10, etc.

St. Hedwiges, after her separation from her husband, carried her love of humility and penance much further in this respect, and wore only clothes of plain gray stuff. Her desire of advancing in perfection put her upon leaving the palace with her husband's consent, and fixing altogether at Trzebnica, near the monastery, often retiring for some days into the austere house, where she lay in the dormitory, and complied with all the penitential exercises of the community. She wore the same cloak and tunic summer and winter; and underneath a rough hair-shift, with sleeves of white serge, that it might not be discovered. She fasted every day, except Sundays and great festivals, on which she allowed herself two small refectations. For forty years she never ate any flesh, though subject to frequent violent illnesses; except that once, under a grievous distemper in Poland, she took a little in obedience to the precept of the pope's legate. On Wednesdays and Fridays her refectation was only bread and water. With going to churches barefoot, sometimes over ice and snow, her feet were often blistered and left the ground stained with traces of her blood; but she carried shoes under her arms, to put on if she met anyone. Her maids that attended her to church, though well clad, were not able to bear the cold, which she never seemed to feel. She had a good bed in her chamber, but never made use of it, taking her rest on the bare ground. She watched great part of the night in prayer and tears, and never returned to rest after matins. After compline she prolonged her prayers in the church till very late, and from matins till break of day. At her work, or other employments, she never ceased to sigh to God in her heart as a stranger banished from him on earth, and returned often in the day to the church, where she usually retired into a secret corner, that her tears might not be perceived. The princess Anne, her daughter-in-law, who usually knelt next to her, admired the abundance of tears she saw her frequently shed at her devotions, the interior joy and delights with which she was often overwhelmed during her communications with heaven, and the sublime raptures with which she was sometimes favored. The same was testified by Herbold, her confessor, and by several servant maids. At her prayers she frequently kissed the ground, watering it with her tears, and in private often prayed a long time together prostrate on the floor. She continued in prayer during all the time it thundered, remembering the terrors of the last day. Her tears and devotion were extraordinary when she approached the holy communion. She always heard mass either kneeling, or prostrate, with a devotion which astonished all that saw her; nor could she be satisfied without hearing every morning all the masses that were said in the church where she was.^d

That devotion is false or imperfect which is not founded in humility and the subjection of the passion. St. Hedwiges always sincerely looked upon herself at the last and most ungrateful to God of all creatures, and she was often seen to kiss the ground where some virtuous person had knelt in the church. No provocation was observed to make her ever show the least sign of emotion or anger. While she lived in the world, the manner in which she reprimanded servants for faults, showed how perfectly she was mistress of herself, and how unalterable the peace of mind was. This also appeared in the heroic constancy with which she bore afflictions. Upon receiving the news of her husband being wounded in battle, and taken prisoner by the Duke of Kirne, she said, without the least disturbance of mind, that she hoped to see him in a short time at liberty and in good health. The conqueror rejected all terms that could be offered for his freedom which obliged Henry, our saint's eldest son, to raise a powerful army to attempt his father's rescue by force of arms. Hedwiges, whose tender souls could never hear of the effusion of Christian blood without doing all in her power to prevent it, went in person to Conrad, and the very sight of her disarmed him of all his rage, so that she easily obtained what she demanded. The example of our saint had so powerful an influence over her husband, that he not only allowed her an entire liberty as to her manner of living, and exercises of piety, but began at length, in some degree, to copy her virtues, observed the modesty and recollection of a monk in the midst of court and became the father of his people, and the support of the poor and weak. All his thoughts were directed to administering justice to his subjects and making piety and religion flourish in his dominions. He died happily, in 1238; upon which melancholy occasion all the nuns at Trzebnica expressed their sense of so great a loss by many tears and other marks of grief. Hedwiges was the only person who could think of the deceased prince with dry eyes, and comforting the rest, said: *"Would you oppose the will of*

^d Whence this distich: In sola missa non est contents ducissa: Quot sunt presbyteri, tot missas optat haberi.

God? Our lives are His. We ought to find our comfort in whatever He is pleased to ordain, whether as to our own death, or as to that of our friends.” The serenity of mind, and composure of features, with which on that occasion she urged the unreasonableness of an ungoverned grief, and the duty of resignation to the divine will, showed, still more than her words, how great a proficient she was in the virtues which she recommended, and how perfectly the motives of faith triumphed in her soul over the sentiments of nature. From that time she put on the religious habit at Trzebnica, and lived in obedience to her daughter Gertrude, who, having made her religious profession in that house when it was first founded, had been before that time chosen abbess. Nevertheless, St. Hedwiges never made any monastic vows, that she might continue to succor the necessitous by her bountiful charities.

One instance will suffice to show with what humility and meekness she conversed with her religious sisters. Out of a spirit of sincere poverty and humility, she never wore any other than some old threadbare, castaway habit. One of the nuns happened once to say to her: “Why do you wear these tattered rags? They ought rather to be given to the poor.” The saint meekly answered: *“If this habit gives any offence I am ready to correct my fault and she instantly laid it aside and got another, though she would not have a new one.”* Three years after the death of her husband, she sustained a grievous trial in

the loss of her eldest, most virtuous, and most beloved son. Henry II, surnamed the Pious, who had succeeded his father in the duchies both of Greater and Lesser Poland, and of Silesia. The Tartars with a numberless army poured out of Asia by the north, proposing nothing less to themselves than to swallow up all Europe. Having plundered all the country that lay in their way through Russia and Bulgaria, they arrived at Krakow in Poland. Finding that city abandoned by its inhabitants, who carried off their treasures, they burnt it to the ground, so that nothing was left standing except the church of St. Andrews without the walls. Continuing their march into Silesia, they laid siege to the citadel of Breslaw, which was protected by the prayers of St. Ceslas or Cieslas, prior of the Dominicans there, and the barbarians, terrified by a globe of fire which fell from the heavens upon their camp, retired towards Legnitz. Duke Henry assembled his forces at Legnitz, and every soldier having been at confession, he caused mass to be said, at which he and all his army received holy communion.^e From this sacred action he courageously led his little army to fall upon the enemy, having with him Miceslas, duke of Oppolen in Higher Silesia, Boleslas, marquis of Moravia, and other princes. He gave wonderful proofs both of his courage and conduct in this memorable battle, and for some time drove the barbarians before him; but at



Source: Saint Hedwig, Polish Heritage Center at Panna Maria, Texas

^e Chromer, 1.6, Diugoss, 1.7, ad an. 1241, p. 677.

last, his horse being killed under him, he was himself slain not far from Legnitz, in 1241. His corpse was carried to the princess Anne, his wife and by her sent to Breslaw, to be interred in the convent of Franciscans which he had begun to found there, and which she finished after his death. The grandchildren of our saint were preserved from the swords of these infidels, being shut up in the impregnable castle of Legnitz. St. Hedwiges herself had retired with her nuns and her daughter-in-law, Anne, to the fortress of Chrosne. Upon the news of this disaster she comforted her daughter the abbess, and her daughter-in-law the princess, who seemed almost dead with grief. Without letting fall a single tear, or discovering the least trouble of mind, she said: *"God hath disposed of my son as it hath pleased Him. We ought to have no other will than Him."* Then, lifting up her eyes to heaven, she prayed as follows: *"I thank you, my God, for having given me such a son, who always loved and honored me, and never gave me the least occasion of displeasure. To see him alive was my great joy; yet I feel a still greater pleasure in seeing him, by such a death, deserve to be forever united to you in the kingdom of your glory. Oh, my God, with my whole heart, I commend to You his dear soul."* The example of this saint's lively faith and hope most powerfully and sweetly dispelled the grief of those that were in affliction, and her whole conduct was the strongest exhortation to every virtue. This gave an irresistible force to the holy advice she sometimes gave others. Being a true and faithful lover of the cross, she was wont to exhort all with whom she conversed to arm themselves against the prosperity of the world with still more diligence than against its adversities, the former being fraught with more snares and greater dangers. Nothing seemed to surpass the lessons on humility which she gave to her daughter-in-law, Anne, which were the dictates of her own feeling and experimental sentiments of that virtue. Her humility was honored by God with the gift of miracles. A nun of Trzebnica who was blind, recovered her sight by the blessing of the saint with the sign of the cross. The author of her life gives us an account of several other miraculous cures wrought by her, and of several predictions, especially of her own death. In her last sickness she insisted on receiving extreme unction before any others could be persuaded that she was in danger. The passion of Christ, which she had always made a principal part of her most tender devotion, was the chief entertainment by which she prepared herself for last passage. God was pleased to put a happy end to her labors by calling her to himself on the 15th of October, 1243. Her mortal remains were deposited at Trzebnica. She was canonized in 1266 by Clement IV, and her relics were enshrined the year following.^f Pope Innocent XI appointed the 17th of this month for the celebration of her office.^g

The constancy of this saint at the loss of friends proceeded not from insensibility. The bowels of saints are so much the more tender as their charity is always more compassionate and more extensive. But a lively apprehension of eternity, and of the nothingness of temporal things, makes them regard this life as a moment, and set no value on anything in it but inasmuch as God, his love or holy will, and our immortal glory, may be concerned in it. Lewis of Granada tells us, in the life of the venerable servant of God John of Avila, that the marchioness of Pliego, when she saw her eldest son delight in nothing but in retirement and devotion, used to say, that no other pleasure in the world can equal that of a mother who sees a dear child very virtuous. The same author mentions another lady of quality, likewise a spiritual daughter of that holy man, who, when she lost her most pious and beloved son said she was not able to express her joy for having sent so dear a saint before her to heaven. If our grief on such occasions is ungoverned, we have reason to fear that our faith is weak, which makes such slender impressions on our souls.

^f Diugoss, Hist. Polon. 1. 7, pp. 781, 783, t. 1.

^g Another St. Hedwiges, daughter of Lewis, king of Hungary, (who was also elected king of Poland,) was chosen sovereign queen of Poland in 1384 and was eminent for her immense charities to the poor, her liberality to churches, monasteries, and universities; her humility and aversion to pomp or gaudy apparel; her meekness, which was so wonderful that, in so exalted a station, she was utterly a stranger to anger and envy. She read no books but such as treated piety and devotion; the chief being the Holy Scriptures, Homilies of the Fathers, Acts of Martyrs and other saints, and the meditations of St. Bernard, etc. She married Jagello, grand duke of Lithuania, in 1386, on condition he should be baptized, and should plant the faith in his duchy, which became from that time united to Poland. She died at Cracow, in 1399. On her miracles see Dlugoss. (1. 10.p. 160.) Ohromer, and other Polish writers, who gave her the title saint, though her name is not inserted in the Martyrologies.

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Medieval Texts about St. Hedwig of Silesia

- ** Vita sanctae Hedwigis (Life of St. Hedwig):** the medieval Latin life of the saint, foundational for later accounts of her life and miracles.
- ** Die große Legende der heiligen Frau Sankt Hedwig:** a medieval German version of the Hedwig legend. <https://archive.org/details/diegrokelegended0001unse/mode/2up> (Accessed 18Oct2026). (GERMAN ONLY)
- ** Legenda św. Jadwigi:** Polish-language editions and studies of the St. Hedwig legend.
- Legenda o św. Jadwidze in pictures. <https://sbc.org.pl/dlibra/publication/329139/edition/311071/legenda-o-sw-jadwidze> (Accessed 18 October 2026).

Note: This biography is for all desiring to grow in holiness and follow His Holiness Pope Pius XI address to 2000 nurses assembled at Castel Gondolfo on August 27, 1935 for the II World Congress of Catholic Nurses (www.ciciams.org / www.nacn-usa.org): *to first and foremost bring the Christian supernatural, Christ to our patients, bring salvation to souls*. May it also help nursing students with your Nursing History course. Source: Diana L. Ruzicka (2022). *The Book of Nurse Saints*. Available at www.lulu.com/spotlight/Ruzicka