

Saint Lidwina

SAINT OF THE DAY

14_04_2024



Much venerated in the Netherlands, Saint Lidwina of Schiedam (1380-1433) was a Dutch mystic who offered all her sufferings to Christ for the salvation of souls and had visions of Hell, Purgatory and Paradise. From childhood she had a tender devotion to Our Lady and loved to spend time absorbed in prayer before the image of Our Lady of Schiedam. During the winter of 1395, while she was ice-skating with some friends, Lidwina had a bad fall and broke a rib. It was the beginning of her personal ordeal. After the fall, her health deteriorated. And since then - she was just 15 years old - she was forced to stay

in bed, affected by a progressive paralysis that according to her hagiographers only spared her left hand.

A priest helped Lidwina to accept the situation, teaching her the salvific value of sufferings united to those of Christ. She was constantly fasting, as attested also by a document produced at the time by the authorities of Schiedam. Her reputation for holiness spread over the years outside her native land, so much so that many pilgrims - including several sick people from Flanders, Germany and England - came to visit her, both for the miraculous healings attributed to her and to receive her spiritual counsel. The heart of her life was the Eucharist. One day her supernatural gifts were tested on the very real presence of Jesus in the consecrated Host. When her priest approached her with an unconsecrated particle, Lidwina immediately distinguished it. An experience common to the great mystics, if one thinks of the repeated trials to which the Servant of God Teresa Neumann (1898-1962), for example, was subjected, who for 39 years fed exclusively on the Eucharist.

Her guardian angel often visited her and Heaven granted her several visions of the places of the afterlife. After these visions she offered her sufferings and prayed even more ardently, so that with her prayers she was able to free several souls in Purgatory. One day she obtained from God to show a priest and friend, the pain suffered in Hell by the soul of a lady he had attended: the priest was terrified, promising to change his life. In a vision, a rosebush appeared to her with the inscription: "When it blooms, your sufferings will end". During Holy Week in 1433, she could finally exclaim, "I see the rosebush in bloom!". She died on Holy Tuesday. Her tomb immediately became a place of pilgrimage and the following year a chapel was built in her honour.

Patroness of: ice skaters, chronically ill people