

SAINT BONIFACE - PATRON OF GERMANY

JUNE 5

*Oh Lord, let St. Boniface intercede for us, that we may firmly adhere to the Faith he taught,
and for which he shed his blood, and fearlessly profess it in our works.*

Boniface was born in 680 in Devonshire, England. From the age of thirteen he was educated in the Benedictine monastery of Exeter, where he later became a monk.

He went to Rome to obtain the Pope's blessing on his mission to the German people. It was a slow and dangerous task. He destroyed the temples of idols and built churches on their site. Once Boniface started to chop down a huge oak tree, which was dedicated to the god Jupiter, when suddenly a great wind, as if by miracle, blew the ancient oak over. When the God they had been worshipping did not strike him down, the people were amazed and converted to Christianity. He built a chapel dedicated to Saint Peter from its wood at the site - the chapel was the beginning of the monastery in Fritzlar.

Boniface was recalled to Rome, consecrated bishop by the Pope and returned to expand and organize the Church in Germany. In 745, he chose Mainz as his Episcopal See, after he had established a number of dioceses. He corrected abuses and built religious houses.

Boniface set out to convert a pagan tribe in Holland. While he was waiting to administer Confirmation to some newly-baptized Christians, a troop of pagans arrived. His attendants would have opposed them, but he said, "My children, do not resist." The pagans killed the saint and fifty-two Christians who were with him on June 5, 755. St. Boniface is the patron saint of Germany. After his martyrdom, he was quickly hailed as a saint in Fulda and other areas in Germany & England. His cult is still notably strong today. Boniface is celebrated (and criticized) as a missionary; he is regarded as a unifier of Europe, and he is seen (mainly by Catholics) as a German national figure. His remains were returned to Fulda, where they rest in a sarcophagus which became a site of pilgrimage.

Attributes: axe; book; oak; scourge; sword

Parts are from *Picture Book of Saints* By Rev. Lawrence G. Lovasik and Wikipedia