

Reflection Friday Week 16 St Bridget of Sweden 2021

St Bridget of Sweden (1303 - 1373) married a nobleman and had 8 children. She was summoned by the King of Sweden (aged 30), to serve as lady-in-waiting to the queen. She tried without success to moderate the riotous and indecent life of the royal court. After a pilgrimage to St James at Compostela, Bridget and her husband Ulf decided to spend the rest of their lives in monasteries. Ulf died in 1344, but Bridget founded a double monastery (for men and women in separate but adjacent institutions) as a new monastic order. In 1350 she travelled to Rome for the Holy Year, and spent the rest of her life there caring for the poor and the sick, denouncing the excesses of the aristocracy, and robustly telling the Pope to return to Rome from Avignon. She had many mystical visions which she feared might be the work of the Devil; but a Cistercian reassured her, and she published her revelations which were partly devotional and partly prophetic.

The Psalm could have been written by Bridget: *"I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise always on my lips; in the Lord my soul shall make its boast."* In the brief synopsis of her life, the presence of the Spirit of God flowing through her is evident. It is expressed in her founding a religious order and in her service of the poor and sick. The Spirit cannot be held back or possessed; it continually reaches out to others as seen in the first members of her order. The Spirit also sought expression in her mystical visions. One of the rich blessings of our plague has been our rediscovery of the importance of human contact, of being together. We have discovered that we are incomplete without others in our lives. The vine continually seeks self-expression in new branches bringing forth new fruit. The same Spirit flows through everything. This means every single member of the vine is important so that the Spirit can flow freely and be shared by all. St Bridget stands with us affirming, encouraging and promoting our role in the vine.

Quotes:

Therefore, do not doubt that the good Spirit of God is with you when you desire nothing but God and are completely inflamed by him!

O Lord, light up the darkness. Say to my soul nothing happens without your permission. And nothing you permit is without comfort.

- ***There was a marathon in Sweden*** that went all the way to the eastern border. I guess you could say the race ended at the Finnish line.
- *The Swedish government says that we can have Christmas gatherings of up to 8 people without any problems. So obviously untrue! Who knows 8 people without any problems?*