



Also known as:

Dympna

Dimpna

Dympne

Born:

Ireland

Short Biography:

Daughter of a pagan Irish chieftain named Damon, and a beautiful devoted Christian woman whose name has not come down to us. Her mother died when Dymphna was a teenager. Her father searched the Western world for a woman to replace his wife, but none could. Returning home, he saw that his daughter was as beautiful as her mother, and maddened by grief, he made advances on her. She fought him off, then fled to Belgium with Saint Gerebernus, an elderly priest and family friend.

Dymphna's father searched for them, and his search led to Belgium. There an innkeeper refused to accept his money, knowing it was difficult to exchange. This told Damon that his daughter was close - it would be unusual for a village innkeeper to know a lot about foreign currency, and his knowledge indicated that had recently seen it. The king concentrated his search in the area. When he found them in Gheel, he beheaded Gerebernus, and demanded that Dymphna surrender to him. She refused, and he killed her in a rage.

The site where she died is known for its miraculous healings of the insane and possessed. There is now a well-known institution on the site, and her relics are reported to cure insanity and epilepsy.

Died:

beheaded in Gheel, Belgium

Patronage:

- against sleepwalking
- against epilepsy

- against insanity
- against mental disorders
- against mental illness
- epileptics
- family happiness
- incest victims
- loss of parents
- martyrs
- mental asylums
- mental health caregivers
- mental health professionals
- mental hospitals
- mentally ill people
- nervous disorders
- neurological disorders
- possessed people
- princesses
- psychiatrists
- rape victims
- runaways
- sleepwalkers
- therapists

Representation:

being beheaded by the king

kneeling at Mass while her father murders the priest Gerebernus

lamp

praying in a cloud surrounded by a group of lunatics bound with golden chains

princess holding a lamp and sword

princess with a sword holding the devil on a leash

young woman with Saint Gerebernus

woman with a sword in her hand and a fettered devil at her feet

Readings:

Lord, our God, you graciously chose Saint Dymphna as patroness of those afflicted with mental and nervous disorders. She is thus an inspiration and a symbol of charity to the thousands who ask her intercession. Please grant, Lord, through the prayers of this pure youthful martyr, relief and consolation to all suffering such trials, and especially those for whom we pray. (Here mention those for whom you wish to pray). We beg you, Lord, to hear the prayers of Saint Dymphna on our behalf. Grant all those for whom we pray patience in their sufferings and resignation to your divine will. Please fill them with hope, and grant them the relief and cure they so much desire. We ask this through Christ our Lord who suffered agony in the garden. Amen.

O God, we beseech Thee through Thy Servant, Blessed Dymphna, who didst seal with her blood the love she bore Thee, her Eternal Spouse, to grant relief to those in our midst who suffer from mental afflictions and nervous disorders. Through Christ, Our Lord. Amen. – John T. McNicholas, Archbishop of Cincinnati

The name of Saint Dymphna is an A object of veneration everywhere, but especially is it so in the city of Gheel, where the devotion to the saint is so natural to the inhabitants that it need not be aroused. The reason is of course evident. Saint Dymphna dwelt in the city of Gheel until the time when she sanctified Gheelian soil by shedding her blood. Hers was the first shed for Jesus Christ and His Faith in Brabantine territory. Sovereign Pontiffs and the Bishops have always shown their veneration for Saint Dymphna and have favored with indulgences the church which is built over the saint's tomb; the tomb which God has favored with so many miracles through her intercession. Amidst such surroundings the people of Gheel cannot remain indifferent toward this holy virgin and martyr. In the older litanies Saint Dymphna is mentioned not only under the title of Patroness of Gheel, but also as Patroness of Brabant. The afflicted who have invoked the name of Saint Dymphna have not found her wanting. Since she resisted courageously the insane, raging love of her father, God has made her the special protectress of all who are afflicted with nervous disorders, and the many miraculous cures at Gheel have established her in that title. We ought to invoke the powerful aid of Saint Dymphna with faith and confidence. We ought to celebrate her feast, honor her holy relics, attend the devotions held in her honor, and visit her Shrines. We ought to pray to her daily, and above all our younger generation ought to imitate her virtues, particularly her purity. – by The Catholic Chaplain, from Devotion in Honor of Saint Dymphna, 1951