

St. Wulfram of Sens

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Son of an official in the court of King Dagobert. Courtier under Clotaire III. Priest. Benedictine. Archbishop of Sens, France in 682, but in 685 he surrendered his see to Saint Amatus, whom he felt was the rightful bishop. Gave away his lands and evangelized the Frisians in Scandanavia with a group of monks for twenty years, remembered there as the Christian crew who "bore the White Christ" to these people.

Converted the son of King Radbod, and was allowed to preach the Gospel. He met with some success, but it was a rough and pagan land. children were sacrificed to heathen gods by hanging or drowning in the sea; people would cast lots at festivals to pick a victim, and the loser was immediately hanged or cut to pieces. Wulfram appealed to King Radbod to stop the slaughter, but the king said it was their custom, and he could not change it. He challenged Wulfram to rescue the victims if he could; Wulfram then waded into the sea to save two children who had been tied to posts and left to die in the rising tide.

The turning point in the mission came with the rescue of Ovon. Ovon had been picked by lot to be sacrificed by hanging. Wulfram begged King Radbod to stop the killing, but the commoners were outraged at the sacrilege. Wulfram eventually obtained an agreement that if Wulfram's God saved Ovon's life, Wulfram and the God could have the man. Ovon was hanged, and swung from the rope for two hours, during which Wulfram prayed. When the heathens decided to leave Ovon for dead, the rope broke, Ovon fell – and was alive. Ovon became Wulfram's slave, his follower, a monk, and then a priest at Fontenelle. The faith of the missionaries (and their power to work miracles), frightened and awed the people who turned from their old ways, and were baptized.

Even King Radbod converted, but just before his baptism, Radbod asked where his ancestors were. Wulfram told him that idolators went to hell. "I will go to hell with my ancestors," said the King, "rather than be in heaven without them." Later, near death, Radbod sent for Saint Willibrord to baptize him, but died before the saint's arrival.

Wulfram's relics were translated from Fontenelle to Abbeville, and in 1062, they were moved to Rouen, France. The life of Wulfram was written by the monk Jonas of Fontenelle eleven years after his death.