

## Saint Notburga of Eben

Born circa 1265, Rattenberg, Tyrol, Austria

Died 14 September 1313, Rattenburg, Tyrol, Austria

Notburga was a cook for the noble Rattenburg family. After the death of the old count and countess, she continued to serve their son Henry and his wife, Odelia. Henry's parents had encouraged Notburga to give their table scraps to the poor, but Odilia and Henry turned the poor away with nothing and ordered Notburga to feed all leftovers to Odilia's pampered pigs.

When Henry caught Notburga taking her own food to the poor, he ordered her out of the castle. She went to work for a farmer who promised that she could leave for services whenever the church bell rang. Late one Sunday during harvest season, however, Notburga was still in the field when the last bell rang. The farmer insisted that she continue cutting wheat. Notburga raised her sickle saying, "God be the judge, this sickle will be the witness of the agreement that I was to go." It stayed suspended in the air for all the other reapers to see. The farmer reconsidered and let Notburga go say her prayers. Meanwhile, back in Rattenberg, everything had gone wrong and Henry was sure that he was being punished for dismissing Notburga. He begged her to return, promising that she could give away all the food she wanted. Notburga gave in and returned to Rattenberg. Henry soon recovered his fortune, and Notburga served as the Rattenbergs' housekeeper for another nineteen years. When she died, her coffin was placed in a cart and pulled by two oxen. Without any guidance, they took Notburga's body to the chapel where she had always prayed. It is said that angels lifted her coffin and placed it in her grave there.

### **The Genius of Notburga of Eben:**

An unusual saint in the Middle Ages, Notburga was neither a noble-woman nor a nun, neither a martyr nor a miracle worker, but she proved that even a humble servant could become a saint.

### **Reflection:**

*"None of us lives for oneself, and no one dies for oneself. For if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; so then, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's."*

*Romans 14.7-8*

Gallick, Sarah [The Big Book of Women Saints](#) p. 277