

On this day: St. Sadalberga

Gerelyn Hollingsworth | Sep. 22, 2011 | NCR Today

On this day we remember St. Sadalberga (c. 605 - 670), founder of the Abbey of St. John at Laon.

The various accounts of her life, which are compared in *Sainted Women of the Dark Ages*, [1] edited and translated by Jo Ann McNamara and John E. Halborg with Gordon Whatley, Duke University Press, 1992, tell us that she was the child of saints, the wife of a saint, the sister of a saint, the mother of saints, and the aunt of a saint. She was compared to Paula and Melania and to Augusta Helena, who, like Sadalberga, were married women and mothers before entering religious life.

The Introduction provides the background for understanding the reliability of the *vitae* of Merovingian abbesses. An earlier tendency to discount some of these powerful women as legendary has been overcome by modern scholarship. Sadalberga and the other saints in the book were not "ancient goddesses in disguise. Each of them lived a life in historical time. Each one left a legacy of property, a tomb, and her own body as a miracle-working relic, which in many cases is still preserved."

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[1]

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