



## **St. Ursula and Her Maidens**

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d. 451 • Britain

In a church of the German city of Cologne can be found a stone with an ancient inscription. The stone honors the spot where Ursula and her maidens died for their Faith long ago.

Legend says that the pagan king of England requested that the British king Maurus give his daughter Ursula to his son in marriage. The king of England's messengers made many promises of wealth and friendship if Ursula came to England to be the prince's bride, but threatened danger and ruin if she refused. King Maurus was anxious because the king of England and his son were pagans, and he was a Christian king whose daughter was especially dedicated to God. But Ursula agreed to become the prince's bride if he would be instructed in the Faith and baptized. And so the agreement was made, and while the prince learned about the Faith, Ursula would make a pilgrimage to Rome.

Ursula embarked on her ship with eleven maidens to accompany her and set sail across the North Sea. Great winds arose and brought Ursula's ship to the great Rhine River, and Ursula and her maidens passed through the city of Cologne on their way to Rome.

After they had seen Rome and its holy sites, Ursula and her maidens traveled back north to meet her promised prince. But when they returned to Cologne, the barbarian Huns were pillaging the country and attacking the city. Seeing Ursula and her maidens, the Huns rushed upon them to take them as their brides.

But Ursula stood tall among her maidens and declared in a ringing voice to the Huns that she and her ladies were Christian maidens and would not be forced into marriage. When the Huns saw that Ursula and her maidens would not become their brides, they put the maidens to death, and so they became glorious martyrs for the Faith.

A great church was built over that holy place where the maidens died, and a stone was inscribed in their memory so that pilgrims could come to pray and remember the maidens.

St. Ursula, help me to remain pure and chaste for Christ!