



St. Henry of Sweden

Henry was an Englishman of the twelfth century residing at Rome. In 1152, he was consecrated Bishop of Uppsala, Sweden, by the Papal Legate Nicholas Breakspear, who later became Pope Adrian IV. In 1154, St. Eric, King of Sweden, led a punitive expedition against the Finns in retaliation for their marauding activity into Sweden, and Henry accompanied him.

Eric offered peace and the Christian Faith to the people of Finland, but they refused. A battle ensued and the Swedes won. Henry baptized the defeated people in the Spring of Kuppis near Turku. When Eric returned to Sweden, Henry remained behind, working to convert more of the Finns. To this end he built a church at Nousis, which became his headquarters. In time, Henry met a violent death on account of his love of God. A converted Finnish soldier named Lalli had murdered a Swedish soldier. After careful consideration of the facts and assiduous prayer, Henry imposed the penalty of excommunication on the murderer. Lalli became enraged and slew the saintly bishop with an ax. Henry was buried at Nousis, and miracles were reported at his tomb.