



January 19

Commemoration: Henry, Bishop of Uppsala, martyr, 1156

Saint Henry (died allegedly 20 January circa 1156) was a medieval English clergyman. He came to Sweden with cardinal Nicholas Breakspeare 1153 and was probably designated to the new Archbishop of Uppsala, but the independent church province of Sweden could be established only 1164 after the civil war was over, and Henry would have been sent to organize the Church in Finland, where Christians had existed already at least two centuries. According to legends, he entered Finland together with King Eric the Saint of Sweden and died as a martyr, becoming a central figure in the local Roman Catholic Church. However, the authenticity of the accounts of his life, ministry, and death are widely disputed.

Together with his alleged murderer Lalli, Henry remains one of the most recognized people from the early history of Finland. His feast continues to be celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church of Finland, and he is commemorated in several Protestant liturgical calendars.

Art: Henry walking on his murderer. Painting from the Church of Taivassalo about 1450.