



On this weekend of Pentecost, at the 11:00 a.m. Mass, we will bless a new icon for OLM, and we are so proud of Selah Seibel as she painted for us an icon of the Three Queens. St. Bertha of Kent, St. Clotilde of Paris, and St. Ethelburga of Northumbria. We are also grateful to the Women's Guild, for their patronage of this fine gift to add to the rich patrimony of our church. This treasure depicts three saintly queens who married pagan husbands and brought them into the Catholic Church. This icon honors women who drew not only their husbands and their families to Christ, but also entire kingdoms. Interestingly enough, these three queens are all related.

The central figure of St. Clotilde is the eldest of these three matriarchs. She was born in Lyon, in the Kingdom of Burgundy around the year 474. The Burgundians were a Germanic tribe of Barbarians who had settled where modern-day France, Italy and Switzerland come together, in the western part of the Alps and the Rhone Valley. St. Clotilde was Catholic at a time when most of the Goths around here were Arian heretics. When she married the pagan Frank Clovis, she would not rest until her royal husband was baptized as a Catholic, and with that baptism began the long and illustrious history of French Catholicism. With Clovis, Clotilde built the Abbey of St. Genevieve in Paris. After her husband's death, the queen retired to an Abbey of St. Martin in Tours, France, where she prayed constantly before the tomb of St. Martin. She built many churches. In this iconography, St. Clotilde is shown wearing a crown, and holding in her hands a church. She died in 545, and was buried next to her husband in the Abbey of St. Genevieve in Paris. St. Clotilde's feast day is June 3rd. She is the patron saint of

The figure on the left (holding the book) is that of St. Bertha. Bertha was the great-granddaughter of St. Clotilde and King Clovis, and so she was a Merovingian princess. She was born in 539 in Neustria (that is to say the western lands of the Franks). St. Bertha had been raised near Tours, in France. She married the pagan Saxon King Ethelbert of Kent, and moved to Canterbury, bringing with her a Catholic chaplain. It was a condition of her marriage, that she would be allowed to remain Catholic, and bring with her a bishop/confessor. Her royal chapel, St. Martins, still stands in Canterbury today, and it is the oldest place of continuous Christian worship in England (though today it is Protestant). St. Bertha worked with Pope St. Gregory the Great in Rome to bring missionaries to the pagan Anglo-Saxons. By example and piety, she brought her husband into the Catholic Church, and St. Ethelbert became the first baptized Anglo-Saxon King. Still, Bertha knew heartbreak too, as her own son remained pagan at her death. It is thought that St. Bertha died around 612 in Canterbury, though the actual date of her death is disputed. It is said that she was buried in her royal chapel of St. Martin's. In our icon she is shown holding a book (as Bertha could read). Her feast day is May 1st.

The figure on the right is that of St. Ethelburga. Ethelburga, who was the daughter of St. Bertha and King Ethelbert of Kent. She was the great-great granddaughter of St. Clotilde and King Clovis. Ethelburga married the pagan king, Edwin of Northumbria, in 625, and brought with her a chaplain, St. Paulinus, a missionary monk from Rome who had come to Canterbury. Ethelburga helped to convert her pagan husband to the Christian faith. In 627 Edwin was baptized and became the first Catholic king of Northumbria. This began the conversions in the Saxon north. Today her husband is known as St. Edwin, for he was a just and a pious king. St. Edwin was attacked and killed by the pagan king, Penda of Mercia. After St. Edwin was killed at the Battle of Hatfield Chase in 633, Queen Ethelburga left the royal court and returned to her homeland of Kent where she founded a monastery and became an abbess. She holds the abbey church of the monastery she established in this icon. Ethelburga died around 647. Her feast day is April 5th.

These three medieval queens, all related, have obscure feast days on April 5th, May 1st. and June 3rd. We are so proud to honor them in this beautiful icon. Thanks again to Selah for all her hard work, which is a labor of love we know. We are proud of Selah, and of all our artists. The parish will be so proud to remember these three saintly queens together.