

Blessed Ulrika of Hegne

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Franziska Nisch was born on September 18, 1882, of unwed parents. We are told that they were too poor to be married. Franziska spent her youth in extreme poverty.

She entered the convent, October 17, 1904, at Hegne, and as a novice received the name, Ulrika. Following her First Profession, April 24, 1907, she was sent as an assistant cook to Buhl, and later to St. Vincent's Home in Baden-Baden.

Ulrika died May 8, 1913, at the age of thirty-one. It was believed that her life had been quite insignificant. Her small, quiet voice and life in general led others to think that there was nothing notable about her. She, like the prophet, "encountered God in the gentle, almost imperceptible breeze."

Sister Ulrika found greatness in the clatter of pots and pans in a kitchen. She found God in everything, something to love in every person, even those who expressed no kindness toward her, even when tears were the only response to humiliation and hurt. Ulrika remained poor her whole life. Her life, her words, her actions remained with those who, like herself, had no voice.



Sister Ulrika wanted to lose herself in a “sea of love,” inviting all of us to live in love. Lived in love, even the most insignificant life can reveal God’s goodness and love to the world. The message of her beatification revealed the secret of her glorious achievement in three parts: find God in our working day; we cannot believe alone; love knows no measure.

Ulrika lived a simple life of love and service. Her constant desire to be love for others expressed itself in service to others. We are told that when her body was exhumed for observation after fifty years, it was found to be intact except her fingers were gone. It was a remarkable sign that she had literally worn them out in service to others.

Klaus Hemmerle, author of **The Silent Voice**, calls Sister Ulrika *the silent voice*. It appears that the cemetery where Sister Ulrika was buried was made into a park during the war; and where she was buried became obscured. However, an elderly sister remembered that a tree had been planted to mark the grave. It was thought that the roots of the tree might have penetrated the coffin and, therefore, there would be nothing to examine at the exhumation. When the tree was pulled up it came with the roots cradling the coffin in an embrace rather than penetrating into the coffin. Thus Sister Ulrika’s witness to holiness would not remain in question, but was revealed for all to see.



Though Sister Ulrika lived a simple and hidden life among her sisters and co-workers, the good news she proclaimed by the way she lived was made visible to the world and proclaimed loud and clear by the church to the world.

The beautification process for Sister Ulrika was begun in 1951. On November 1, 1987, the Feast of All Saints, Pope John Paul II declared Sister Ulrika blessed.