



St. Sunniva of Norway

July 8

St. Sunniva was born in the tenth century and is the patron saint of the Norwegian Diocese of Bjørgvin, as well as all of Western Norway.

She was the heir of an Irish kingdom, but had to escape with her brother and others when a pagan king, who wanted to marry her, invaded. She and her companions became shipwrecked off the coast of Norway, but eventually landed on Silje Island where they took refuge in a cave. The local people suspected them of stealing their sheep and demanded that they be arrested. Sunniva prayed to God that they should not fall into the hands of the heathens, upon which rocks fell down blocking the entrance to the cave.

Sunniva and her companions died in the cave, but in the years to come miracles were reported on the island. When King Olaf Tryggvason excavated the cave in 996, the body of Sunniva was found intact. Later, a monastery, Selje Abbey, was built on the site, the ruins of which can still be seen.

During the fires in Bergen in 1170-71 and in 1198, Sunniva's remains were taken from the monastery and placed near the flames. This action halted the advance of the fire and was hailed as a miracle.¹

¹ www.o.ca.org