

## ***Martyr Dymphna, Protectress of the Mentally Ill***

*May 15*

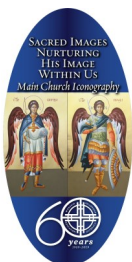


The holy and glorious Virgin-martyr Dymphna (also known as Dimpna or Dympna and may be synonymous with the Irish Sts. Davets and Damhnait, Damhnade) was a 7th-century Celtic saint who died circa 650. She is the patron saint of those who suffer from mental illnesses and nervous system disorders, epileptics, mental health professionals, incest victims, and runaways.

Dymphna lived in the 7th century and was the daughter of a pagan Irish king and his Christian wife.

When she was only fourteen, her mother passed away. Her father, driven mad by grief and mental illness, started to make inappropriate advances towards her. She was forced to flee to Belgium accompanied by her confessor father, St. Gerebernus. Her father, Damon, sent soldiers and eventually found them. Confronting them at Gheel, Damon ordered his soldiers to slay Gerebernus and begged Dymphna to return with him to Ireland. When she refused, he decapitated her in a rage. Locals later buried the two bodies.

Their relics were discovered at Gheel near Antwerp in the thirteenth century. The burial place of Dymphna has long been associated with accounts of miraculous cures of mental illness.



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