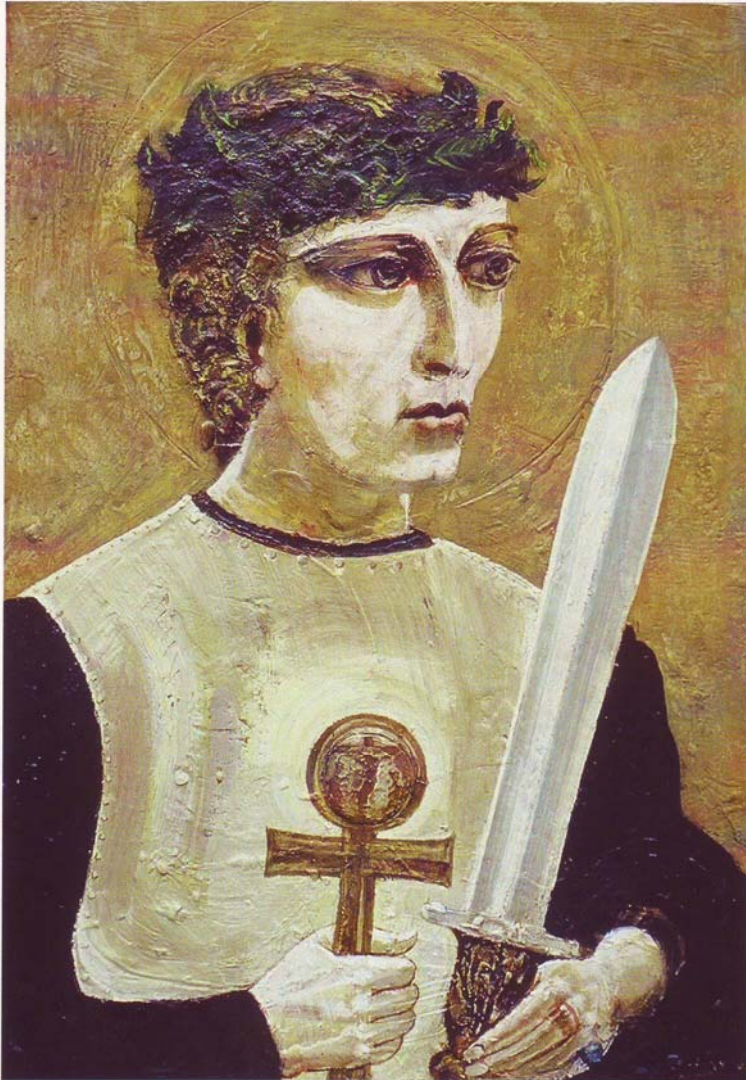


St Alban



St Alban

century Germaus of Auxerre brought the relics of the martyr to Rome. Theophanu, a former Byzantine princess, became Empress of Germany and took the relics of her favourite saint, St Alban, with her to Cologne in the 10th Century. Her stone tomb is also near the shrine of St Alban. St Pantaleon was built in 980 AD. He was presumably a physician to the Roman Emperor Maximus and was beheaded in about 350 AD for his Christian faith.

Now back to my visit. The guide explained that the parish of St Pantaleon decided to open the tomb and present the Anglican Cathedral with a relic, as they owned a beautiful shrine but had no remains of “their” saint. This was to contribute towards a better understanding between the Catholic and the Anglican Church.

So, after 1100 years in the year 2002 the German Bishop Claus Dick opened the shrine in the presence of the Reverend Stephen Miles of the Anglican Church in Cologne with others looking on in great anticipation.

It is the time of the year again when members of Holy Cross congregation join the international pilgrimage to the shrine of St Alban our first English martyr.

You may recall that we published in last year’s Magna the history of St Alban, but I have discovered a few more interesting details. I am a member of the German YMCA and last October we arranged a trip to St Alban. At the cathedral of St Alban a German guide explained in front of the beautiful shrine of St Alban that it had stood empty without any relics of the saint in it until the year 2002 and that even after that it only contains one shoulder blade. It was a great surprise for me to learn that the relics of St Alban are in the Roman Catholic parish church of St Pantaleon in Cologne, Germany, my home town.

On my last visit to Cologne I visited the church and was lucky to arrive in time to hear the guide tell the story of St Alban to a group of tourists around his shrine.

To re-call the history briefly: St Alban, an English soldier in the Roman army, was killed in AD 209 for refusing to denounce his Christian faith. In the 5th

They found two shoulder blades, a rib cage, one upper thigh bone and some skin tissue. It also contained a sachet of lavender, a rosary and a simple silver-plated ring, items which most likely were added at a later date.



St Pantaleon

When the guide asked for any questions, I enquired, to the great amusement of the tourists, why we received only one shoulder blade. He explained that as there were two shoulder blades we were lucky to be able to receive one of them. The shrine of St Albans would most likely still be empty but we know that part of him is in its rightful place. I took a photograph of the shrine and the article from last year's Magna with me to Cologne. A few days later, after my return from Germany, I received a letter with all the details and photos.

The next time my travels to Cologne will take me to my pilgrimage to the Saint, only a tram ride away. St Pantaleon is a very interesting church with a strong connection between Cologne and Constantinople (Byzantium). I hope you will allow me to write later in the year an article for Magna about this church, especially considering our "Saintly Connections".



The Shrine of St Alban

Annelise Surry