

A blessed Katie day!

+Katharina von Bora Luther, 1552, Renewer of the Church+

“I will cling to Christ like a burr to a dress.”

—*Katharina's last recorded words*

December 20th marks the commemoration of Katharina. Though her family was noble they had lost most of their finances. Katie was 'given' to the nunnery called Nimbschen (near Grimma, Germany) before she was 10 years old. She was well educated and was a respected manager being in charge of finances. She was also known for brewing a great beer. We do not know when she first met Martin Luther as he traveled throughout the region as a monk in charge of the region for his order. Katie and a number of nuns heard about the Reformation and were smuggled out of the nunnery at risk of life and taken to Wittenberg. Luther managed to marry off all but Katie who would not take just anybody. Finally, she settled on Luther and he relented.

We do not know how romantic their initial relationship was but they became very close over time. Theirs was a more modern marriage with mutual respect and sharing of duties. Martin called Katie his rib because he did not know what he would have done without her. She took care of finances, cooking, brewing beer, shared raising children and she ran the whole household. Martin Luther also called her "Herr Katie." The term "Herr" was reserved for males. He also invited her to participate in theological debates after supper with the male faculty. He enjoyed that they were ticked off that a woman could more than hold her own intellectually with them. They were partners and helpers to each other. When Luther died, he left all his material belongings to Katie though that was not legal then. That caused quite a stir in the 16th century.

After Martin's death in 1546 things got much harder for Katie. She had to flee Wittenberg to Torgau, where the Herr Katie Brewhaus is still serving very, very good beer to this day. She suffered a series of personal challenges but her faith did not waver as her last words indicated.

When I think of Katharina von Bora Luther, I am reminded of the bold and strong women of faith in my own life. Friends named Katie, but especially three

Lutheran women in my life. My mother, Rosella, my wife, June, and my sister-in-law, Mary. I hope this Katie day will remind you of bold and strong women in your life.

Pr. Bill