

Today is the Memorial of St. Gertrude the Great. She was born in 1256, and died on November 16, 1302. She is known as one of the great mystics of the 13th century.

At the age of 25, she began to experience spiritual visions which shifted her interest from worldly knowledge to the study of Scripture and theology.

She is believed to be the author, or one of the authors, of what is titled *The Herald of Divine Love*, a work of several volumes which covers many theological topics.

She is known for her devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus - 500 years before this became widespread in the Church; as well as a devotion to the Poor Souls in Purgatory. A prayer attributed to her reads:

*Eternal Father, I offer You the most precious blood of thy Divine Son, Jesus, in union with the Masses said throughout the world today, for all the Holy Souls in Purgatory, for sinners everywhere, for sinners in the universal church, for those in my own home and in my family. Amen.*

She also composed a series of Spiritual Exercises for deepening spirituality through prayer and meditation. These exercises focus on such themes as baptism, conversion, commitment, discipleship, union with God, praise of God, and preparation for death.

Benedict XIV (the fourteenth) gave her the title “the Great” to distinguish her from another St. Gertrude, as well as to recognize the depth of her spiritual and theological insight.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... let us pray for an increase in our own spiritual gifts ... so that we might recognize the Love God has for us ... and the precious gift of the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.