



Pilgrimage Basilica St. Ida Herzfeld

Short church guide

Dear pilgrims, believers and guests,
As pilgrimage church we would like to cordially welcome you all at the grave of the holy Ida.

With this “short church guide” we would like to bring near to you the life and work of our patroness, tell about her faith and invite you to a prayer. During a round tour some characteristics of this basilica will be explained.



Herzfeld is the oldest pilgrimage site in Westphalia. People have been coming to the grave of St. Ida since 825.

Pontifex Benedict XVI ennobled the church to papal basilica minor on October 15th, 2011 through Bishop Felix of Münster.

Due to the pale stone the today’s third building from the year 1903 is also known as “the white cathedral at river Lippe” in common parlance.

The life of St. Ida of Herzfeld

Ida was born around 765 as a franconian earl’s daughter in the area around Cologne. She was related to Charlemagne from the house of Pippin. During the Saxon wars the saxonian duke Egbert came for his recovery to Ida’s estate. Their mutual affection led to marriage in the year 786. In the same year the young couple left for their manor near Osnabrück, which was a donation from King Karl, the later emperor.

Making rest at the Lippe-passage near the todays Hovestadt castle, Ida had a dream vision in which angels gave her the order to build a church for the honor of god.

According to the tradition, Ida saved a deer’s life by protecting him from the huntsmen. In return for this, the deer carried the stones for the first church through the Lippe-passage.

This was the origin of the name:

Hirutfeldun– Hirschfelder – Herzfeld
 (“Hirut“ and “Hirsch“ means “deer” in ancient and current German language)

This first church was consecrated in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Germanus of Paris.

Ida and Egbert had 5 children. Egbert died in 811 and was buried on the south side of the first church.

Ida herself had a room built over the grave of her husband – the “portico” – and left the king’s court.

From now on she devoted her life to the people, who were brought into poverty and distress by the Saxon Wars.



Twice every day Ida distributed alms like food and clothes out of her lithic coffin, which stood in her cell to remind her of the transience of all being. Soon, people adored her as the “Mother of the Poor”. Ida died on September 4th, 825 and was buried in her sarcophagus beside her husband Egbert.

Soon after her death, miracles were reported at her grave and it began an ever increasing stream of pilgrims to her grave. In 980 Bishop Dodo of Münster ennobled her “for the honor of the altars” (canonization).

Her acting as pacifier between Saxons and Franks is said to be one of the first European signs of peace and unity.

With her work and firm belief in God Ida has shaped this region and founded Christian life here.

HOLY IDA, YOU MOTHER OF THE POOR!

Please God for us that we are able to share with those who are in need. You left the royal court after the death of your husband and lived a life of poverty and prayer in the plain room on the south side of the church. You laid your wealth into the coffin to feed from it the hungry and clothe the naked. So you witnessed your faith in the Resurrection. See our weak faith and strengthen him. Multiply the spirit of love and prayer in ourselves, so that we achieve the resurrection of the dead.

AMEN.

(translated from the Ida prayer book)

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Description of interior

Upon entering the Basilica you first look at the **five gorgeous high sanctuary windows** showing scenes from the life of Mary and thereunder the corresponding Old Testament stories: Annunciation by the angel, visit at Elizabeth, Birth of Christ, Presentation of Jesus at the temple and the 12- year-old Jesus at the temple. The upper panes show the four major prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, in the middle you can see the Crucified.

The High Altar shows images of the Three Magi, the Marriage at Canaan, the Last Supper, the Resurrection and in the middle above the tabernacle the Holy Trinity (Throne of Grace).

The further tour through the basilica we would like to start with you in front of the steps of the **altar**. This altar is connected with the subjacent crypt. On the right column you can see the **Everlasting Help**, on the left opposite the coat of arms of Pope Benedict XVI is mounted on the **pulpit** as a sign of a basilica.

The old windows in the **left side transept** show pictures of St. Liudger, the first bishop of Münster, the Saints Ewald and of St. Katharina of Alexandria

Let's move forward to the **right side transept**. In these newer windows (from 1954) the doomsday is illustrated as well as St. Teresa of Ávila.

Since 2012, an English choir organ from 1886 is installed, which accompanies choirs and musicians on many occasions.

When looking westward back to the nave you can see above the organ loft the big **Gereon window** with the illustration of the martyrdom of Saint Gereon of Cologne.

The **Sauer Organ** of 2002 has about 3700 pipes, 3 manuals and 47 stops. At the organ loft statues of the patrons of sacred music are fixed, St. Cecilia and King David.

Passing by the right column, we enter the **Ida chapel**. In the three windows motifs from the life of Ida are shown: dream-vision, church-building and Ida while distributing alms.

Furthermore, you see a crowned Apple-Madonna as well as a large crucifix from the 17th Century. A special feature is the **capstone** from the 13th Century, the oldest preserved portrait of our patron saint.



Capstone

Stepping out of the Ida chapel you will see on the right side aisle the **Altar of Passion** from 1520

In front of you stands the gothic **baptismal font** dating from 1523 with reliefs of saints: Ida, blessed Egbert or Charlemagne, Peter, Paul, Andrew, Liudger, Wendelin and Hubertus

The altar in the left side aisle, the **Joseph altar**, shows images of the Holy Family.

Above the access to the crypt is an artfully carved lying Ida with deer and Church, the so called "**Idenrast**", from 1673.

The **crypt** was opened in 1980 after the excavations in 1975/76 during which the grave of St. Ida was found. Going down the stairs to the crypt, the **portal arch** of the first church is placed on the wall, decorated with franconian bulb ornaments. In the crypt, you step up to the **head shrine** of our patron saint. It was created in 1500 in Essen-Werden, where the head relic was kept since the canonization. The head shrine only came back to Herzfeld in 1802, together with the "Vita Idea" written by the monk Uffing.

Center and spiritual heart of the crypt is the **Confessio**, in which the **sarcophagus** (a relic to be touched), the **shrine** with the relics and the altar in the upper church are connected.

Detail from Ida Shrine - Ida's death



During excavations in 1975/1976 the masonry of the first church and the outbuilding (portico) as well as the **grave location of Ida, characterized by the bog oak cross**, was exposed in the left back area.

On the ground the dimensions of the first church are represented by concrete strips in the pavement.

Here, the tour through the St. Ida Basilica ends.

We cordially invite you now to pray for the intercession of St. Ida. Feel and fathom the mind and the work of faith and enrich your life with the joy of faith of the holy Ida of Herzfeld.

You will find more information about St. Ida of Herzfeld and the Basilica in our magazine stand in the back of the church (mostly in German language).

*Yours sincerely,
The pilgrimage parish St. Ida*