

to the prison, where they found the saint fearless and ready to receive the stroke of death, which they instantly inflicted on him by chopping of his head. St. Gregory the Great attributes to the merits of this martyr the conversion of his brother, King Recared, and of the whole kingdom of the Visgoths in Spain. Levigild was stung with remorse for his crime but was not converted, yet on his death-bed he recommended his son, Recared, to St. Leander, desiring him to instruct him in the same manner as he had done his brother. St. Gregory of Tours observes that before St. Hermemegild declared himself a Catholic, Goths who embraced the faith of the Trinity were severely persecuted. Many lost their goods, others were banished, and several died of hunger or by violence. St. Gregory of Tours ascribes this persecution and the death of St. Hermenegild to the instigation of Gosvint, Levigild's second wife.

St. Gregory the Great points out that from his first conversion to the faith, St. Hermenegild's main study was to square his life by the most holy maxims of the gospel. He suffered humiliation and sufferings for Christ which he bore with heroic courage, fidelity, with the perfect charity of the martyrs, and a true king in his chains. As St. Paul states, in this kingdom, souls are replenished with the fullness of God, and they can desire no other goods. Joy and pleasure are possessed in this kingdom. It surpasses all that the heart can desire or conceive. Worldly splendor is less than a dream or shadow, if compared to the dignity, glory, and honor of this happy state. We also are invited to the same kingdom.

*(excerpted from: www.ewtn.com)

****Reflection-St. Hermenegild teaches us that constancy and sacrifice are the best arguments for the faith, and the surest way to win souls to God.**

** (excerpted from: magnificat.ca)

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Saint Hermenegild

Patron Saint of: Converts

Feast Day – April 13



**...a light streaming from his cell
told the Christians who were watching near
that the martyr had won his crown,
and was keeping Easter with the Saints in glory.**

Saint Hermenegild

*Levigild, or Leovigild, Arian King of the Visigoths, King of Spain, had two sons by his first wife Theodosia, namely, Hermenegild and Recared. Levigild raised the children in the Arian heresy, which Hermenegild professed, but he married Ingondes, a zealous Catholic and daughter to Sigebert, King of Austrasia, in France. Levigild to secure his posterity, associated his two sons with him in his sovereignty, and allotted to each a portion of his dominions to inure them to government, and Seville fell to the lot of the eldest, Hermenegild. After the death of Theodosia, Levigild married Gosvint, a bigoted Arian. Ingondes suffered much from Gosvint; but in spite of all her cruel treatment, she adhered strictly to the Catholic faith. It was the force of her example, and of the instructions and exhortations of St. Leander, Bishop of Seville, that Hermenegild became a convert.

Taking the opportunity of his father's absence, Hermenegild abjured his heresy and was received into the Church by the imposition of hands, and the unction of chrism on the forehead. Levigild, who was already exasperated against his son, upon the first appearance of his change, being now informed of his open profession of the Catholic faith, in a transport of rage divested him of the title of King, and resolved to deprive him of his possessions, his princess, and even his life, unless he returned to his former sentiments. Hermenegild resolved to stand upon his defense, and was supported by all the Catholics in Spain; but they were too weak to defend him against the Arians. The prince sent St. Leander to Constantinople to solicit help from Maurice, their king, who was having problems with the Persians and could not offer any help. Hermenegild implored the assistance of the Roman generals who had a small army in that part of Spain, on the Mediterranean coast. They received his wife

Ingondes and infant son as hostages, but corrupted by Levigild's money, they betrayed him. Levigild held his son besieged in Seville for more than a year, until Hermenegild could no longer defend himself. He fled to join the Roman camp but being informed of their treachery, he went to Cordova and then to Osseto, where there was a church held in particular veneration over all of Spain. He stayed there with three hundred chosen men; but the place was taken and burnt by Levigild. Next, he sought a refuge in a church at the foot of the altar; and the Arian king not presuming to violate that sacred place, permitted his second son, Recared, to go to him with a promise of a pardon. Believing his father's sincerity Hermenegild submitted himself and asked forgiveness at his feet. Levigild embraced him until he entered into his camp. Then he ordered his son to be stripped of his royal robes, loaded with chains and conducted as a prisoner to the tower of Seville in 586.

Levigild employed all manner of threats and promises to draw him back to his heresy, and, hoping to overcome his constancy, had him confined in a most frightful dungeon and treated with all sorts of cruelty. The prison was to him a school of virtue. He clothed himself in sackcloth and added other voluntary austerities to the hardship of his confinement, and with fervent prayer begged God to give him the strength and support necessary to support him in his combat for the truth. The solemnity of Easter had arrived, and his father sent to him an Arian bishop, offering to take him in his favor if he received communion from the hand of the prelate, but Hermenegild rejected the proposal. When the bishop told Levigild of his sons refusal to receive communion, the father became furious and he sent soldiers