

PRESS RELEASE

AUGUST 2019 / 3 PAGES

BEBENHAUSEN MONASTERY

Bebenhausen Monastery

Who was St. Bernard? Bebenhausen and the “Love of Bernard”

The Cistercian monk, Bernard of Clairvaux, founded 343 monasteries in his lifetime, also leaving his mark on Bebenhausen. St. Bernard's Day, on August 20, is one of the few saints' days also celebrated by the Protestant and the Anglican churches. Who was this monk, who cast a spell over so many?

WHO WAS ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX?

The man who would become abbot was born in 1091 in a French castle, the son of a Burgundian knight. The third son of a noble family, medieval tradition stated that he pursue an ecclesiastical career. His mother, in particular, valued a Christian upbringing. Even before his birth, a white dog had appeared to her in a dream and was interpreted as the future “watchdog of the lord.” Bernard himself also had frequent religious visions. A sign of his charisma: Before entering the monastery in 1112, he managed to convince his entire family and many friends to renounce the worldly and follow his path. He decided to join the Cîteaux Monastery, which had been founded in 1098 by Robert of Molesme. There, he opposed the displays of splendor and power demonstrated by the Benedictines in Cluny and demanded a return to the strict ascetic rules. In 1114, Bernard took his religious profession and was sent to found a new monastery one year later. This monastery was Clairvaux, which would become the most significant and defining Cistercian abbey.

THE CISTERCIAN MONASTERY IN BEBENHAUSEN

Bernard and his sermons were so spellbinding that the order spread across all of Central Europe within a few decades. Many former Benedictines or Premonstratensians became Cistercians. This was also the case in Bebenhausen, which was originally founded as a Premonstratensian monastery in 1183. Once the Cistercian monks took up residence in 1189, the monastery expansion moved

1/3

OUR HERITAGE. YOURS TO ENJOY. The State Palaces and Gardens of Baden-Wuerttemberg opens, maintains, connects and markets 60 historic monuments in Southwest Germany. In 2018, more than 4 million people visited these historical sites with distinguished cultural treasures: among them Heidelberg Palace, Schwetzingen Palace and Gardens, Ludwigsburg Residential Palace, Weikersheim Palace and Gardens, World Heritage Site Maulbronn Monastery, Salem Monastery and Palace, as well as the Hohentwiel Fortress Ruins.

YOUR MEDIA CONTACT Press and media service of the State Palaces and Gardens of Baden-Wuerttemberg provided by the state gazette agency:
Phone +49(0)711.6 66 01-38, ft.lang@staatsanzeiger.de

IMAGE DOWNLOAD Photographs of the monuments can be found online in printable quality at: www.schloesser-und-gaerten.de/en (Section “Press & media”/“Press images”).

PRESS RELEASE

AUGUST 2019 / 3 PAGES

BEBENHAUSEN MONASTERY

forward quickly. Work followed the “Bernardian Plan.” This plan stipulated that the complex have a body of water flowing through it and that the structures be grouped around the cloister. The monastery church was also designed based on Bernard's guidelines and is therefore without a tower, instead boasting an impressive ridge turret on the crossing. The simple and severe Cistercian architectural style is still apparent in the interior, although it was redesigned in the Gothic style centuries later.

REFORM AND REPERCUSIONS

Bernard of Clairvaux may not have founded the Cistercian order, however, his theoretical and practical reforms were instrumental in how quickly the order expanded. The technical achievements in agriculture were particularly important, as they provided the order with substantial wealth for the time. The elaborate irrigation systems of ponds and channels with which the Cistercians made their mark are still impressive today. Bernard himself was given the title “doctor mellifluus,” or honey-tongued scholar, for his charming manner of speaking. He advocated not just for his order, but also quite successfully for the crusades, just beginning at that time.

MONASTERY COMPLEX WITH DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER

The monasteries built according to Bernard's guidelines are still especially impactful today. The complete lack of any architectural sculpture or painting is of particular importance; these would distract from prayer and prevent worship, according to Bernard. This is also why pictures of saints would not appear until the centuries later. This reduced architectural style, combined with the monumental size, still makes a strong impression on those who see it today—one reason why the structures at the medieval Bebenhausen Monastery at the edge of the Schönbuch forests remain such a draw for visitors.

LOVE OF BERNARD IN BEBENHAUSEN

A rare image of Bernard of Clairvaux is located in the monastery church. The panel painting, by an unknown master, depicts one of the saint's visions: praying before a

2/3

OUR HERITAGE. YOURS TO ENJOY. The State Palaces and Gardens of Baden-Wuerttemberg opens, maintains, connects and markets 60 historic monuments in Southwest Germany. In 2018, more than 4 million people visited these historical sites with distinguished cultural treasures: among them Heidelberg Palace, Schwetzingen Palace and Gardens, Ludwigsburg Residential Palace, Weikersheim Palace and Gardens, World Heritage Site Maulbronn Monastery, Salem Monastery and Palace, as well as the Hohentwiel Fortress Ruins.

YOUR MEDIA CONTACT Press and media service of the State Palaces and Gardens of Baden-Wuerttemberg provided by the state gazette agency:
Phone +49(0)711.6 66 01-38, ft.lang@staatsanzeiger.de

IMAGE DOWNLOAD Photographs of the monuments can be found online in printable quality at: www.schloesser-und-gaerten.de/en (Section “Press & media”/“Press images”).

PRESS RELEASE

AUGUST 2019 / 3 PAGES
BEBENHAUSEN MONASTERY

crucifix, while Christ bends down from the cross and embraces him. This painting reflects the deep, mystical piety expressed by the Cistercians, and which also made Bernard a leading figure of recatholization. The Love of Bernard at Bebenhausen only survived the iconoclasm of the Reformation—which claimed many images of saints—by accident, since the image was interpreted as a deposition from the cross.

MONASTERY ADVENTURE DAY ON OCTOBER 13

St. Bernard's most impressive legacy is surely the preserved monastery, where the spirit of the medieval Cistercian order is still palpable and alive today. For the fifth time, the former monasteries of Baden-Württemberg are hosting a “Monastery Adventure Day”: On October 13, the life of the monks, and their day-to-day at the time when the monasteries were founded, can be experienced through special tours and events. The UNESCO World Heritage Site, Maulbronn Monastery, is also participating with an especially rich program.

WWW.KLOSTER-BEBENHAUSEN.DE/EN
WWW.SCHLOESSER-UND-GAERTEN.DE/EN

OUR HERITAGE. YOURS TO ENJOY. The State Palaces and Gardens of Baden-Wuerttemberg opens, maintains, connects and markets 60 historic monuments in Southwest Germany. In 2018, more than 4 million people visited these historical sites with distinguished cultural treasures: among them Heidelberg Palace, Schwetzingen Palace and Gardens, Ludwigsburg Residential Palace, Weikersheim Palace and Gardens, World Heritage Site Maulbronn Monastery, Salem Monastery and Palace, as well as the Hohentwiel Fortress Ruins.

YOUR MEDIA CONTACT Press and media service of the State Palaces and Gardens of Baden-Wuerttemberg provided by the state gazette agency:
Phone +49(0)711.6 66 01-38, ft.lang@staatsanzeiger.de

IMAGE DOWNLOAD Photographs of the monuments can be found online in printable quality at: www.schloesser-und-gaerten.de/en (Section “Press & media”/“Press images”).