

THE STARTING OF IT ALL

LIFE IS WONDERFUL

W B G V S P W H L C T T F O A R F N D W Q G

I had a great uncle who spent a good portion of his adult life researching our family history. Believe it or not, he was able to trace our family line back into the 500s AD. At the starting of it all is one of my favorite ancestors: St. Arnulf (or Arnold), Bishop of Metz. Read through this brief history and you might find a pointer or two to help you figure out the clues.

Arnulf was born around 580 in Layum Castle, today known as Lay-Saint-Christophe in northeastern France. As Arnulf was coming of age he found himself under the guidance of Gandalf (whom I believe was the Bishop of Metz at the time). Soon thereafter, Gandalf recommended Arnulf to King Theodebert II where he was placed in charge of the province of Moselle. It was in Moselle around 600 that Arnulf gave his beloved Dode a ring. They had many children, including sons Ansegisel and Clodulf. Clodulf, later St. Cloud, also became a Bishop of Metz. Ansegisel's descendants include Pepin d'Heristal, Charles Martel, Pepin le Bref and finally Charlemagne. It is through Ansegisel that my own lineage is found.

Arnulf and his wife Dode, realizing that life is wonderful, both felt a call to join the Church in more committed roles. As far as I can find, while they were still married, she moved into a Benedictine convent and became a nun while he became a priest with plans to move into a monastery. Those plans were squashed under God's thumb when he was chosen as the 29th Bishop of Metz near the end of 612.

Arnulf played an important role in the politics of his time, being a close advisor to King Dagobert I. He participated in the councils of Paris, Metz, Reims, and Clichy. Yet he longed to retire to solitude and did so in the middle of 629. After retiring as bishop, he moved to a mountain near Remiremont where he built a chapel. Here he sheltered lepers and others rejected by society. Arnulf died on August 16, 640. He was buried in a hillside there at his mountain chapel.

Just two years after his death, the parishioners of Metz went to Remiremont to recover the remains of their beloved former bishop (to re-inter them in Metz). I imagine their planning was not well thought out. It was a hot day in July 642, the terrain was inhospitable, they were running out of drink and the procession was nearing exhaustion. The next nail in a coffin would be for them, they feared (and not their bishop's coffin!), so they had an idea.

One of the parishioners, Duc Notto (which I think is an awesome name), prayed "By his powerful intercession the Blessed Arnulf will bring us what we lack." Immediately the small remnant of beer at the bottom of a pot multiplied in such amounts that the pilgrims' thirst was quenched and they had enough to enjoy the next evening when they arrived in Metz. That's why, among other things, St. Arnulf is the patron saint of beer and brewers. So the next time you're having a beer, raise a pinky to my great x46 grandfather – a saintly bond.

T X J G P R Z X Z M M R G G G K M F W F C V T J D B M F

A SAINTLY BOND

BURIED IN A HILLSIDE

