September 17th: Memorial of Saint Hildegard of Bingen, Virgin and doctor of the Church

Gospel text (*Mt* 25:1-13): Jesus told his disciples this parable: "The Kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom... Since the bridegroom was long delayed, they all became drowsy and fell asleep..."

St. Hildegard of Bingen, virgin and doctor of the Church (1098-1179)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
(Città del Vaticano, Vatican)

Today I would like to present St. Hildegard of Bingen, an important female figure of the Middle Ages who was distinguished for her spiritual wisdom and the holiness of her life. Hildegard was clothed by Bishop Otto of Bamberg, and in 1136 became the community magistra (Prioress) of the Benedictine Monastery of St Disibodenberg. She fulfilled this office making the most of her gifts as a woman of culture and of lofty spirituality.

Hildegard's mystical visions resemble those of the Old Testament prophets: expressing herself in the cultural and religious categories of her time, she interpreted the Sacred Scriptures in the light of God, applying them to the various circumstances of life. Pope Eugene III authorized the mystic to write down her visions and to speak in public. From that moment Hildegard's spiritual prestige continued to grow so that her contemporaries called her the "Teutonic prophetess".

Her mystical visions use a language for the most part poetic and symbolic. In her best-known work entitled "Scivias", that is, "You know the ways" she sums up in 35 visions the events of the history of salvation from the creation of the world to the end of time. With the characteristic traits of feminine sensitivity, Hildegard develops the theme of the mysterious marriage between God and humanity that is brought about in the Incarnation. On the tree of the Cross take place the nuptials of the Son of God with the Church, his Bride, filled with grace and the ability to give new children to God, in the love of the Holy Spirit.

—In other writings Hildegard took an interest in medicine and in the natural sciences as well as in music, since she was endowed with artistic talent.