Pressrelease June 6th 2012

**New birthplace confirmed for patron saint of Europe, Bridget of Sweden**

**New facts about the Catholic saint, Bridget of Sweden, also one of six patron saints of Europe, reveals the new, earlier unknown, birthplace. She was born at Sköldnora farm in Fresta parish in the municipality of Upplands Väsby north of Stockholm and not in Finsta in the municipality of Norrtälje as previously believed. This new information is revealed in a new book and is based on documents from the canonization in Rome and from the Swedish National Archives.**

The traditional belief has been that Bridget of Sweden was born in Finsta in the municipality of Norrtälje, around 60 kilometers north of Stockholm. This is also carved into a granite memorial stone erected in Finsta. In newly discovered documents from the Swedish National Archives documenting the land trade it is shown that St Bridget of Sweden’s father, Birger Persson, didn’t own the property in Finsta when St Bridget was born in 1303. The property was in fact sold seven years before, In the papal canonisation documents from Rome it is confirmed that the birthplace of St Bridget of Sweden is in fact on the Sköldnora estate in Fresta parish in present day municipality of Upplands Väsby.

– St Bridgets father traded the Finsta estate for the Sköldnora estate in Fresta parish already in 1296. Not until 1317 did he repurchase Finsta, but at that time was St Bridget already married. So in the light of this new information, it is unlikely that she at all spent time in Finsta in her youth as earlier believed, says Mats Lejdeby, the Swedish researcher and author of the new book “Kampen om bygdemakten.” (Translated: The struggle for self government) that reveals this new information.

St Bridget of Sweden is internationally one of Sweden’s most known individuals and in Upplands Väsby it is of course with happiness this new research is received.

– There is a strong interest from around the world regarding holy Bridget and this discovery is of course important for our community as a deeply historical place. Fresta church that might have been the place of her baptism also has the worlds largest collection of runestones from the Vikings. I hope that we soon can honour her by erecting a monument at the correct birthplace, says Per-Erik Kanström, Mayor of Upplands Väsby.

The the book by Mats Lejdeby it is also revealed that St Bridgets daughter Märta inherited Sköldnora estate after her mothers death. The estate was later passed to the Vadstena convent in the west of Sweden that was founded by St Bridget and was opened in 1384.

**For more information:**

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**Facts on St Bridgets birthplace:**

* St Bridgets father, Birger Persson, exchanged Finsta estate for Sköldnora estate in Fresta parish, present day Upplands Väsby in 1296. Seven years before St Bridget was born.
* The papal canonisation documents from Rome confirm the parish of Fresta as the birthplace of St Bridget.
* In the year 1317, after that St Bridget married and moved away from home, her father repurchased Finsta estate in the municipality of Norrtälje.
* St Bridgets daughter Märta inherited the Sköldnora estate from her mother and gave it later in her testament to the Vadstena convent that was founded by her mother.
* Sköldnora estate (also spelled Skällnora) was situated at the north east end of lake Norrviken in present day Upplands Väsby. With time and the land rise in this area the main settlement was moved and built up on the peninsula in the lake. In early 1700’s this building was replaced by the present day buildings.

This news was published yesterday afternoon in Swedish national and local press as well as on television. Some examples:

<http://www.dn.se/sthlm/heliga-birgittas-fodelseort-vasby-inte-finsta>

<http://www.svd.se/nyheter/inrikes/heliga-birgitta-foddes-i-vasby_7256047.svd>

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=103&artikel=5138613>

<http://sverigesradio.se/sida/artikel.aspx?programid=114&artikel=5139314>

<http://svt.se/nyheter/regionalt/abc/heliga-birgitta-foddes-i-vasby-1>

<http://www.aftonbladet.se/senastenytt/ttnyheter/inrikes/article14933732.ab>

<http://www.barometern.se/nyheter/TT_inrikes/heliga-birgitta-foddes-i-vasby%283300428%29.gm>

<http://st.nu/start/inrikes/1.4777540-heliga-birgitta-foddes-i-vasby>

<http://www.gp.se/nyheter/sverige/1.967300-heliga-birgitta-foddes-i-vasby?articleRenderMode=extra_comment>