

# Hildegard of Bingen

## An Abbess for Health Care

Learning Leaflet: Women in Science

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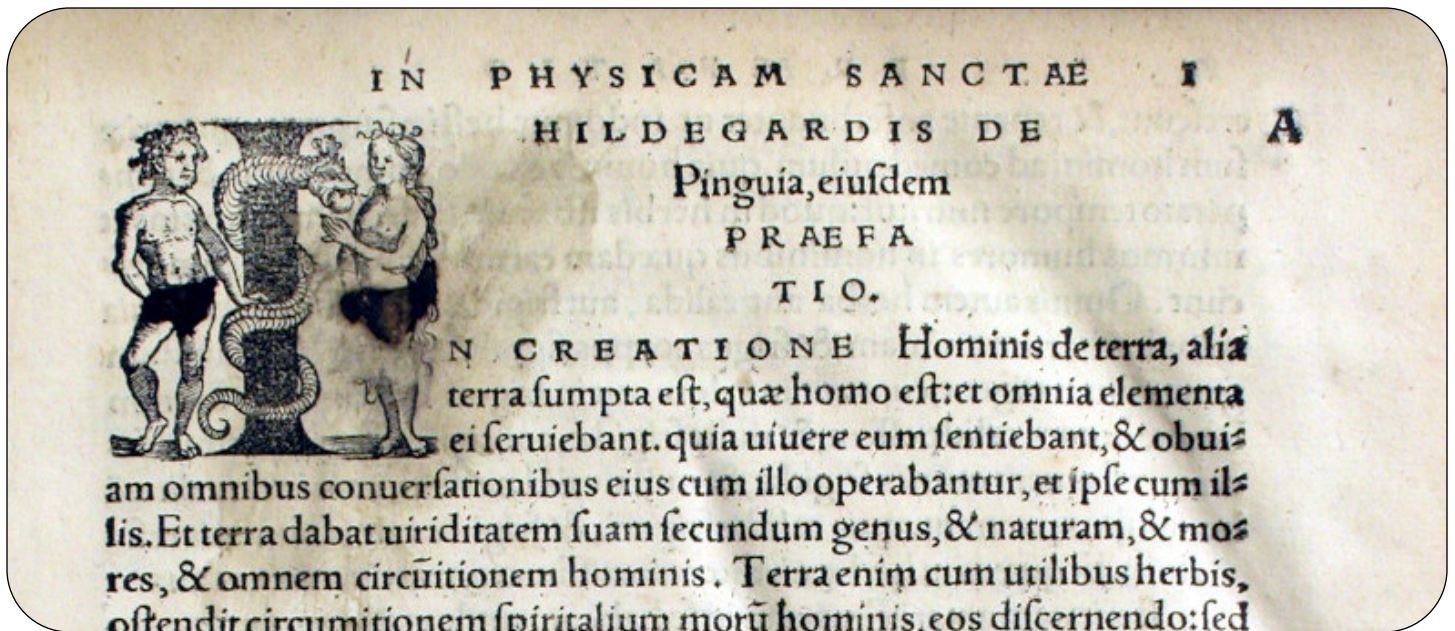


Hildegard of Bingen, *Physica* (Strassburg, 1533)

Exhibit: Galileo's World | Gallery: Music of the Spheres, no. 19

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Why did people come to Hildegard's convent?



### Hildegard of Bingen: An Abbess for Health Care


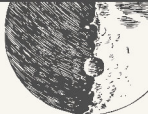

In the Middle Ages, convents were places where anyone might seek free health care. In this book Hildegard, Abbess of convents at Rupertsberg and Elbingen in the 12th century, explained their herbal remedies and medical procedures.

Similarly, Galileo's eldest daughter, Sister Maria Celeste, served the health care needs of others in her Convent of San Matteo in Arcetri and frequently offered her father medical advice and healing herbs.

Hildegard composed music, rebuked rulers, saw visions and wrote many books. In addition to this work on medicine, Hildegard wrote other works on cosmology and theology, corresponded in nearly 400 letters with abbots, popes and emperors, and created at least 70 musical compositions.

On October 7, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI declared Hildegard of Bingen a Doctor of the Church, the 4th woman of 35 persons honored by that title in the Roman Catholic Church.

Kerry Magruder

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