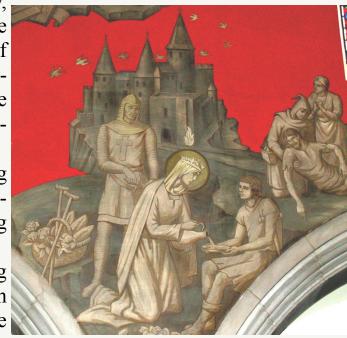# Saint Elizabeth

12th Century Hungary

Daughter of the King of Hungary, St. Elizabeth was born in 1207. At age four, she was betrothed to the prince of Thuringia, which is in present-day Germany. Although she grew up in the opulence of the royal court, she remained very religious.

Married at age 14 to Ludwig (who was then 21), St. Elizabeth enjoyed a very happy marriage, having three children together with Ludwig.

In the spring of 1226, Ludwig was away in Italy when a combination of floods and pestilence brought plague and famine to Thuringia. St. Elizabeth assumed control, and distributed alms to the poor in all parts of the country, which even included selling state robes and ornaments. In order to care personally for the unfortunate she built a hospital with twenty-eight beds and visited the inmates daily to attend to their wants; at the same time, she personally aided nine hundred poor every day.

Upon his return, Ludwig approved all she had done. The next year, while on a crusade in Palestine, Ludwig was killed, and St. Elizabeth was left a widow at age 20. Soon after, some friars from the new Franciscan order entered the country, and St. Elizabeth was greatly attracted to the ideal of the order. Under their spiritual direction, she practiced prayer and mortification. She later left her life at court, and became a Third Order Franciscan. She built another hospital and devoted herself entirely to the care of the sick, especially to those afflicted with the most loathsome diseases. She died in 1231 at the age of 24. She is the patron saint of bakers. **Her Feast day is November 17.**

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