

Hungarian Saints

Saint Agnes of Bohemia (1211 – 1282)



Agnes was the youngest daughter of Bohemian king Premysl Otakar I and Constance of Hungary, who was the sister of King Andrew II of Hungary, so Agnes was an elder cousin of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. When she was three years old, Agnes was entrusted to the Cistercian order at Trzebnica to be educated. The monastery had been founded by Hedwig, the wife of Duke Henry I the Bearded of Silesia.

Agnes was engaged to Hedwig and Henry's son Boleslav. After Boleslav died, Agnes returned to Prague at the age of six. At the age of eight, she was engaged to Henry, son of Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor. The wedding of Agnes and Henry was cancelled after six years of engagement. Like other noble women of her time, Agnes was a valuable pawn in the marriage game. Agnes refused to play any more part in a politically arranged marriage.

She decided to devote her life to religious works, with the help of Pope Gregory IX. She became a member of the Franciscan Poor Clares. She founded the Hospital of St. Francis (ca. 1232-33) and two convents where the Franciscan friars and Clare nuns who worked at the hospital resided. Taking the vow of poverty, she cooked for and took care of the lepers and paupers personally, even after becoming the Mother Superior of the Prague Clares in 1234.

She was canonized in 1989 and her feast day is June 8.