

Hungarian Saints

Saint Kinga of the Árpády Dynasty (1224–1292)



She was the daughter of Béla IV and Byzantine Princess Maria Laskarina and became wife of Boleslaw V, High Duke of Poland. The couple was set apart by their vow of chastity. Kinga offered her whole dowry for defense against the Mongols and later provided some money to rebuild the country. The Poles also suffered a Mongol invasion. Legend has it that Kinga returned home to ask her father Béla IV, to help the distressed Poles. It was then that she received the salt mine of Máramaros, Transylvania as a present, where she threw her ring into a shaft. Legend has it that the ring was found shortly afterwards in a salt block of the Wieliczka Salt Mine, which she had founded.

Kinga ordered the construction of a number of churches and monasteries, the most prominent being the Franciscan monastery of Ószandec (Sainty Sącz). After the death of her husband, she became a nun and gave all her fortune to the poor. She spent the remainder of her life praying and nursing the sick. She was beatified in 1690 and canonized in 1999, during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II. Her sister, Saint Margaret of the Árpád Dynasty, is now considered as the patron saint of Poland and Lithuania.