

Hungarian Saints

St Margaret of the Árpád Dynasty (1242 - 1270)



She was a nun and the daughter of King Béla IV and Maria Laskarina, the niece of Saint Elizabeth of Hungary and the younger sister of Saint Kinga and Blessed Yolanda. Her family lived in exile in Croatia during the Mongol invasion of Hungary (1241–42). Her parents vowed that if Hungary was liberated from the Mongols, they would dedicate the child to religion. Four-year-old Margaret entered the Dominican convent of Veszprém in 1245. Six years later she was transferred; to the Convent of the Blessed Virgin founded by her parents on the "Rabbit's Island" (Nyulak szigete) near Buda. Today Margaret Island, named after her. The ruins of the convent can still be seen. She spent all her life here, dedicating herself to religion and opposing all attempts of her father to arrange a political marriage for her with King Ottokar II of Bohemia.

She appears to have taken solemn vows when she was eighteen years old. Having established that she was not interested in any throne, but a heavenly one, she proceeded with great joy to live an even more fervent religious life than she had before. She did not glory in her wealth or parentage, but strove to imitate the saints in their holiness. She took her turn in the kitchen and laundry, seeking by choice much heavy work that her rank might have excused her from doing. She was especially welcome in the infirmary, which proves that she was not a sad-faced saint and she made it her special duty to care for those who were too disagreeable for anyone else to tend.

Her canonization procedure had begun in 1276, but not finished until 1943.

Her feast day is January 19.