

## ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

“In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbor of absolutely every person, of actively helping him when he comes across our path.”

Long before the II Vatican Council this teaching which we find in the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* was understood and practiced by St. Elizabeth of Hungary (1207-1231). She recognized and honored Christ in the poor of this world.

As a young girl she was married to Louis of Thuringia whom she loved, and they had three children. Six years later Louis died of the plague. Elizabeth was then 20 years old. She was a pious young woman and became a Franciscan Tertiary, after providing for her children. She dedicated the remaining four years of her life to caring for the poor and the sick, continuing what had already been the pattern of her life. Her confessor and spiritual director, Conrad of Marburg, tells of her in a letter that is read today in the Office of Readings. He tells us that she befriended the poor, visited and nursed the sick, generously gave all that she had as alms to the poor, keeping just one worn dress for her burial.

She died peacefully at Marburg, on November 17, not yet 24 years old. She was canonized four years after her death, by Pope Gregory IX in 1235, and her memory was revered by the poor she loved.

From St. Elizabeth of Hungary we learn to help others “in time of trouble and need.”



Elizabeth of Hungary