

Saints Remembered — November 15 — 21

November 16th — Margaret, Queen of Scotland, 1093

O God, you called your servant Margaret to an earthly throne that she might advance your heavenly kingdom, and gave her zeal for your Church and love for your people: Mercifully grant that we who commemorate her this day may be fruitful in good works, and attain to the glorious crown of your saints; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Proverbs 31:10-11, 20, 26, 28; Psalm 146:4-9; Matthew 13:44-52

Margaret, an English princess, married King Malcolm of Scotland about 1070 (Yes, the Malcolm of Shakespeare's play Macbeth!). By all accounts, Margaret was both a devoted person of faith and an energetic agent for social reform. She used her influence to bring the practices of the Scottish Church more in line with the rest of the Church in the West — by insisting that Lent begin on Ash Wednesday (rather than the following Monday); having the Mass celebrated according to the Roman Rite (and not in “barbarous form and language”), and encouraged her subjects to participate in regular Sunday worship, including the reception of the Communion.

Margaret encouraged the founding of schools, hospitals and orphanages. She worked with her husband to improve the quality of life of the more isolated Scottish clans and, along with him, rebuilt the monastery of Iona and founded the Dunferline Abbey. In the midst of her very active public life (including consulting with her husband on matters of state), Margaret gave birth to eight children. Although she was not as successful at fostering greater unity between the Scots and the English, her efforts throughout Scotland and her active faith made her one of Scotland's most beloved saints.

November 17th — Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln, 1200

O holy God, you endowed your servant and bishop Hugh of Lincoln with wise and cheerful boldness, and taught him to commend the discipline of holy life to kings and princes: Grant that we also, rejoicing in the Good News of your mercy, and fearing nothing but the loss of you, may be bold to speak the truth in love, in the name of Jesus Christ our Redeemer; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen

Titus 2:7-8, 11-14; Psalm 15; Matthew 24:42-47

Hugh was born into a noble family at Avalon in France. Sometime around 1160, he joined the Carthusians, the strictest contemplative order of the Church, at their major house, the Grande Chartreuse, of which he eventually became procurator. With great reluctance, he eventually accepted Henry II's invitation to travel to England to establish a Carthusian House at Witham, Somerset. With equal reluctance, Hugh accepted the King's appointment as Bishop of Lincoln in 1186. He died in London in 1200 and is buried in Lincoln Cathedral (of which he laid the foundation).

While bishop, Hugh continued to live, as much as possible under the rule of his order. He was, by many accounts a person of humility, tact and cheerful disposition. These personal qualities made it difficult to oppose him in matters of Christian principle. His constituents loved him because of his championship of the poor, the oppressed and all sorts of outcasts from society — especially lepers and Jews. He steadfastly sought to administer his diocese independently of secular influence — never afraid to reprove the Crown for injustices wrought upon the poor. He refused, when asked to raise any funds for King Richard's foreign wars. Yet Richard said of him, "If all bishops were like my Lord of Lincoln, not a prince among us could lift his head against them."

November 18th — Hilda, Abbess of Whitby, 680

O God of peace, by whose grace the abbess Hilda was endowed with gifts of justice, prudence, and strength to rule as a wise mother over the nuns and monks of her household, and to become a trusted and reconciling friend to leaders of the Church: Give us the grace to recognize and accept the varied gifts you bestow on men and women, that our common life may be enriched and your gracious will be done; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Ephesians 4:1-6; Psalm 122; Matthew 19:1-8

Hilda was born in 614, the grandniece of King Edwin. Baptized at age 13, she lived at the King's court for twenty years, and then decided to enter the monastic life. She had hoped to join a convent in Gaul (France), but Bishop Aidan recalled her to her home country in East Anglia to a small monastic settlement.

After serving as Abbess of Hartlepool, Hilda established an abbey at Whitby, where both nuns and monks lived in strict obedience to a rule of life Hilda herself had written — based on the rule used by Augustinian monastics. Known for prudence and good sense, Hilda was often sought out by kings and other public officials for advice and

counsel. Many of her monks became priests; several eventually were ordained to the episcopate.

In 663, the abbey at Whitby was the site of the famous synod convened to decide divisive questions of the differing traditions of Roman and Celtic Christianity. Hilda was supportive of the Celtic position, but when the Roman position carried the day, she was obedient to the synod's decision. On her deathbed, surrounded by her monastic community, Hilda urged them all to preserve the gospel of peace for which she had labored a lifetime.

November 19th — Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary, 1281

Almighty God, by your grace your servant Elizabeth of Hungary recognized and honored Jesus in the poor of this world: Grant that we, following her example, may with love and gladness serve those in any need or trouble, in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen

Tobit 12:6b-9; Psalm 146:4-9; Matthew 25:31-40

The witness of Elizabeth's charity is illustrated by the numerous hospitals that bear her name throughout the world. She was born in 1207 at what is now Bratislava in Hungary. She was the daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary and was married in 1221 to Louis IV, Landgrave of Thuringia. Together, they had three children. From an early age, Elizabeth showed concern for the poor and the sick. She received spiritual direction from the Franciscans who had established a presence in the Wartburg in 1223. During a famine and epidemic in 1226 (when her husband was in Italy), Elizabeth sold her jewels and established a hospital where she herself worked to care for those who were sick and poor. She fed the patients out of the royal granaries. When her husband died in 1227, Elizabeth (along with her three children) was compelled to leave the Wartburg because of her "extravagances".

After living for some time in economic distress, Elizabeth eventually took on the habit of the Franciscans — the first of the Franciscan Tertiaries (Third Order) in Germany. Her family agreed to give her a small stipend each month to cover her expenses and she spent the remainder of her life in Marburg, caring for the sick and needy, until her death by exhaustion in 1231. She was canonized by Pope Gregory IX four years later.

**November 20th — Edmund, King of East Anglia & Martyr,
870**

O God of ineffable mercy, you gave grace and fortitude to blessed Edmund the king to triumph over the enemy of his people by nobly dying for your Name: Bestow on us your servants the shield of faith with which we can withstand the assaults of our ancient enemy; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

1 Peter 3:14-18; Psalm 126; Matthew 10:16-22

Edmund became King of East Anglia at age 15 — one of several monarchs ruling various parts of England at that time. The principal source of information about Edmund's martyrdom comes from Dunstan, who became Archbishop of Canterbury some 90 years after Edmund's death. Dunstan had heard the story many years before from a man who claimed to have been Edmund's armor-bearer.

Edmund had been the King of East Anglia for nearly 15 years when the area was invaded by Danish armies in 870. When the Danes reached East Anglia (after cutting a swath of destruction across the countryside), they offered to share their plunder with Edmund if he would acknowledge their supremacy and forbid all practices of the Christian faith in his kingdom. Edmund was advised by the bishops of his kingdom to accept the terms and avert further bloodshed, but he refused. He declared he would not forsake Christ by surrendering to pagan rule, nor betray his people by consorting with the enemy. Vastly outnumbered by the invaders, Edmund's army crumbled and the king captured. According to Dunstan's account, Edmund was tortured, beaten, shot through with arrows and eventually beheaded. The date of his death (November 20) is set by tradition.

The cult of the martyr king grew rapidly and his remains were eventually enshrined in a Benedictine monastery now called, Bury St. Edmunds. Through the centuries, this shrine has become a place of pilgrimage for England's monarchs, who came to pray at the grave of a man who remained steadfast in the Christian faith and loyal to the English people.