

June 10

ON SAINT MARGARET, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND

133.1 First Point

This queen had a very special virtue and piety. Her conduct was so reserved, wise, and serious that no one could look at her without being inspired with respect for her. Her love for prayer was so great that one might say her principal occupation was to pray. Every night, after taking a little rest, she would go to spend much time in church, where she would not allow anyone to speak to her of any business matters. Ah! how solid piety is when it is based on virtue; and how genuine and true virtue is when it is accompanied by piety.

In your state you enjoy several means for practicing virtue and developing piety. You have the opportunity to pray often and the ability to pray well. Do you make use of all these means that God gives you to save yourselves and to acquire the perfection of your state? If you are not faithful to them, you deserve severe punishment from God for such negligence.

133.2 Second Point

Saint Margaret's principal care was to govern her household properly and to make sure that all who belonged to it revered and loved God. She even became the teacher for her children, teaching them herself to read. She devoted herself to their education as her supreme duty, regarding it as the most pleasing thing she could do for God. For the same reason this was likewise the first object of her prayers.

This saint is a great example of what you should do for the children God has entrusted to you. It is a queen who made her first work to do what is essential in your state. Consider this an honor for you and look upon the children God has entrusted to you as the children of God himself. Have much more solicitude for their education and instruction than you would have for the children of a king.

133.3 Third Point

Her love for the poor was extraordinary. Every morning Saint Margaret spent time instructing poor children, and afterward gave them food to eat. Because she honored Jesus Christ in them, she knelt to serve them. She and her husband fed three hundred poor people in their own dining room. It is also said that she frequently got money from her husband, the king, to give alms, and that he gladly gave it to her. She often sent him out into the countryside to become informed about the sad state of the poor in order to bring all his efforts to help them.

You are by your state obliged to instruct poor children. Do you love them? Do you honor Jesus Christ in their persons? With this in mind, do you prefer them to those who have a certain amount of material wealth? Do you have more concern for the former than for the latter? This saint gives you an example of this, and teaches you how you should look upon the poor.

Margaret of Scotland (ca 1046 - 1093) was born in Hungary, where her father, Prince Edward of England, was in exile. At age 12 she returned with her widowed mother to England when Saint Edward Confessor was king, but went into exile again, this time to Scotland, at the time of the Norman Conquest in 1066. King Malcolm III of Scotland fell in love with her and dissuaded her from entering a convent as a nun. She had considerable influence on her husband and was able to resolve the differences between the Celtic church and Rome, thus avoiding a schism. She is also responsible, together with her sons, for infusing much of medieval culture into Scottish life, creating a golden age in Scotland that lasted two hundred years after her death. De La Salle stresses the influence she had on her eight children. She was canonized in 1250 and in the seventeenth century (at the time De La Salle was studying for the priesthood) Pope Clement X made her Patroness of Scotland. Her feast is now celebrated on November 16.