

SAINTS ALIVE! JULY 8 SAINT ELIZABETH OF PORTUGAL



Elizabeth of Portugal was Queen, devout Catholic and, because of her reputation for settling disputes, peacemaker.

The young girl Elizabeth was given in marriage to a Portuguese king. Reflective of her status as a female, she had no say in this transaction and her husband treated her not as a partner but as an object undeserving of fidelity and respect.

Through the grace of God, her husband later amended his ways and made amends to Elizabeth, which included a public apology.

Elizabeth was known as “the Peacemaker” for her roles in reconciling warring parties:

- Elizabeth was a “decisive conciliator” between the Kings of Portugal and Castile (a former kingdom comprising most of Spain) during negotiations that fixed their countries’ borders. Her work prevented war.
- A dozen years later, the Queen and King returned to Spain to arbitrate between Fernando IV of Castile and James II of Aragon (a kingdom in northern Spain).
- Elizabeth served as intermediary between her husband and her son, during the Civil War between 1322 and 1324. The King was prevented from killing his son through the intervention of the Queen.
- Thirty-nine years after her first peace negotiations, Elizabeth stopped another conflict between her son, now king, and the King of Castile. By physically riding between the warring factions, she stopped the fighting and caused terms of peace to be arranged.

If not for these works of peace we may have never heard of Elizabeth. Her personal history, however, indicates that these notable accomplishments were mere fillers of the daily space she devoted to daily mass, to prayer, and to her various charity projects.

Our commitment to pursue peace flows from the inner peace we experience through our relationship with Christ and our belief in the life and dignity of every person *USCCB, 2013*. This commitment and belief compels us to take action.

Saint Elizabeth of Portugal first established this inner peace through a regular practice of mass and prayer; she manifested her belief in life and dignity of every person through her many charitable projects. With this foundation set, she was equipped to pursue worldly peace.

Let us pray to St. Elizabeth for the gifts of inner peace and world peace.

Let us recall her words of St. Elizabeth of Portugal:

“Do not forget that when sovereigns are at war they can no longer busy themselves with their administration; justice is not distributed; no care is taken of the people.”



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