

Speaking of the sickness of the holy king, we must not omit to relate that God visited his servant, notwithstanding his fidelity and zeal, with great sorrows. He sent him a sickness which lasted for three years, and what was still more painful, deprived him, by an early death, of all his children except one son. Saint Stephen brought up his son, who was called Emeric, with the greatest care, and wrote, with his own hand, several instructions for him which he desired him to observe. Foremost among these were, that he should remain faithful to the Catholic faith, protect and disseminate it; that he should show honor and obedience to the clergy; that he should cherish his subjects; attend to his prayers with fervor; be generous to the poor and suffering; deal out justice, and submit himself in adversity to the will of the Almighty. Emeric manifested in his conduct that he endeavored to live according to these holy precepts, and thus gave inexpressible peace and comfort to his father. The king daily begged the Almighty to preserve the life of this beloved son, that the Christian faith might have a protector in him. But this son also, whose holy life was an example of all Christian virtues, was destined to die before his father's eyes, whose grief was too great for words; but greater still was the heroic resignation to the will of the Most High. He even conquered himself so far as to thank God that He had called his beloved son before him into the kingdom of heaven.

The holy son was soon followed by the holy father. When his last hour, which God revealed to him, approached, he devoutly received the holy Sacraments, and then exhorted the bishops and the first men of the state to Christian charity and union; to rule with justice; to remain true to their faith; and not only take the utmost care to protect this, the only faith instituted by Christ, but also to propagate it more and more. After this, the dying Saint turned his eyes to God and his blessed patroness, Mary, and addressing the latter, he said: "To thee, O Queen of heaven, and to thy guardianship, I commend the holy Church, all the bishops and the clergy, the whole kingdom, its rulers and inhabitants; but before all, I commend my soul to thy care." In such devout sentiments, he died on the festival of the Assumption of Our Lady, his greatly venerated patroness... *(excerpted from: //catholicarboroffaithandmorals.com)



Incorrupt right hand of Saint Stephen
Located in St. Stephen's Basilica
Budapest, Hungary

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Saint Stephen

King of Hungary

Feast Day: September 2



*"To thee, O Queen of heaven...
I commend the holy Church... the whole kingdom...
but before all,
I commend my soul to thy care."
Saint Stephen of Hungary*

Saint Stephen, King of Hungary

*Saint Stephen, who is justly called the Apostle of the Hungarians, on account of his unwearied zeal in disseminating the true faith, was born in Hungary. His father, Geisa, was a renowned leader and general of the wild Huns and ruled over them with the title of Duke. Severely as he treated his heathen subjects, he was mild to the Christians who came into his dominion, and when God had bestowed upon him the grace of recognizing the truth of the Christian religion, he determined to establish it in his land. One day, when, occupied with this thought, he laid himself down, and an angel appeared to him in his sleep, who announced to him that he would become father to a son, who was chosen by God to execute all that he was just now revolving in his mind. The angel further said, that on the following day, a messenger of God would come to him, whom he should receive, and to whose words he should listen with due reverence. A similar vision was shown, at the same time, to the wife of Geisa. Saint Stephen, the protomartyr, appeared to her, and among other things, told her to give his name to the child to whom she was soon to give birth. Saint Adalbert, bishop of Prague, arrived on the following day. He instructed the duke and duchess in the truth and baptized them. The prince who was soon afterwards born, was joyfully received into the Church of the Lord by the holy bishop, who gave him, in Baptism, the name of Stephen. Geisa led an edifying life until he died.

When Stephen had arrived at manhood, and had taken the reins of government, he resolved most earnestly, to exterminate all idolatry among his people, and everywhere to plant the emblem of the Christians, the Cross. To be more secure in his pious undertaking, he formed an alliance with the neighboring princes in order to prevent them from assisting those of his subjects who might oppose his design. Notwithstanding this, some of the Hungarian nobility dared to take up arms in defense of idolatry, and to make war against their legitimate Lord. Saint Stephen, full of trust in the Almighty, met the rebels with his small force and defeated them so completely, that in the future none ever dared refuse him obedience. The great and rich booty of which Saint Stephen became possessed on this occasion, he appropriated to the building of a Monastery in honor of Saint Martin, a native of Hungary. The Saint then invited from different Catholic lands, priests and religious men to Hungary to instruct the people.

Those who converted were favored with many privileges and immunities by the devout prince, while the refractory were dealt with in such a manner, that they were prevented from opposing others in embracing Christianity. In various cities and villages he erected Churches and Chapels,

endowing them all richly. The number of the faithful grew in a short time so much, that he divided Hungary into ten dioceses, to all of which he endeavored to give holy bishops. He sent a certain bishop Anastasius to Rome, to request the pope to confirm all he had done for the propagation of the Christian faith, and also to beg the holy Father to proclaim him King, so that he would be invested with greater power, happily to conclude the conversion of the entire country. During the night on which Anastasius arrived at Rome, an Angel informed the Pope of Saint Stephen's request, and commanded him to give to the Saint's ambassador the crown which he had designed for another prince. Inexpressibly rejoiced at everything that Anastasius related to him, the Pope confirmed what Saint Stephen had done to disseminate the faith of Christ, and granted him the privilege to act further as he and his bishops thought the welfare of the Church demanded. He also sent him the crown and a cross of gold which should be carried before him after the coronation.

No sooner had Anastasius returned, than Saint Stephen was solemnly anointed and crowned as the first King of Hungary. After this he married Gisela, the sister of the holy emperor Henry, a princess not less talented than pious, who assisted him most assiduously in all his virtuous undertakings. Besides Saint Stephen's apostolic zeal in spreading the true faith, his charity and generosity deserved the admiration of the world. He was almost prodigal in distributing alms, and spared neither his own garments nor the royal treasures. He often washed the feet of the poor, visited the hospitals during the night and served the sick. Many hours of the night he passed so devoutly in prayer, that he frequently went into ecstasy and was raised high above the earth. The hours of the day he devoted most earnestly to the affairs of the government, and every one of his subjects had free access to him. He indulged neither in hunting, gaming, nor other similar amusements, giving all his time to the administration of the state and devout exercises; "for," he said, "they are more pleasing to me than hunting, gaming and whatever else may amuse a king."

Towards the Queen of heaven, whom he called "My Lady," he was most devout from his tender youth and he chose her as patroness of Hungary. To her honor he built a most magnificent temple at Alba, where he resided. He built churches in her honor in several cities not in his dominions, as at Jerusalem, at Rome and at Constantinople, and to these he attached large convents. Hence, it is not surprising that the divine Mother protected her faithful servant...