



Essential Evangelization

St. Louis

August 25

Crowned King of France at the ripe age of 11, Louis IX, tall and mature for his age, trembled and asked God for courage, light, for the strength to defend the honor of the Church, and to use his authority to serve his people. He became a fierce and just warrior, the living embodiment of Christianity in the 13th century. At the age of 19, he married Margaret, age 12, the oldest daughter of the Count of Provence. Together they had 11 children and this family line continued for 500 years as rulers of France.

Louis built the Shrine of Sainte-Chapelle on an island in the River Seine in Paris. The church is known for its great architecture and beautiful stained glass that he built to house the crown of thorns and other relics. He went to Mass twice daily and surrounded himself in his travels with priests chanting the hours. He “took the cross” on a crusade at the age of 30. When Louis was captured for a brief time and recited the Divine Office every day of his captivity.

Louis, strong minded and strong willed in his resolve for the faith, united France by his holiness and winsome respect for all people. He had 13 special guests of the poor join him for dinner each evening, waiting on them and even washing their feet. He built hospitals and the famous College of Sorbonne, the most famous theological school of Europe of its time. He is also known for his great wisdom as a judge and rendering fair judgments. At the age of 52 he went on a final crusade with his three sons to win back the Holy Places of Tunis. He died on foreign soil and was canonized only 27 years later. Today he is the patron saint of St. Louis, France, and grooms.

“Fair son, the first thing I would teach thee is to set thine heart to love God; for unless he love God none can be saved. Keep thyself from doing aught that is displeasing to God, that is to say, from mortal sin.”

Saint Louis, on his deathbed, instructions to his eldest son.

*This is one of a series of articles on
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