

## Lives of Saints

# St Margaret of Scotland

1050 ? - 1093

Feast day: 16th November



"I thank You,  
Almighty God, for  
sending me so  
great a sorrow to  
purify me from  
my sins."

**St Margaret  
of Scotland**

S . D . C .  
S O C I E T A S  
D O C T R I N Æ  
C H R I S T I A N Æ

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I was born around the year 1050. My mother was Princess Agatha of Hungary and my father was the Anglo-Saxon Prince Edward Atheling. So I was originally an English princess. As a result, I spent much of my youth in the court of my great-uncle, the English King, Edward the Confessor. Around the year 1067 my family had to flee from William the Conqueror. While at sea, our ship was caught in a storm, and as a result, we were shipwrecked off the coast of Scotland. Here, King Malcolm III befriended us. Malcolm and I fell in love and we were married at the castle of Dunfermline in 1070.

My husband was good-hearted, but rough and uncultured, as was his country. Because of Malcolm's love for me, I was able to soften his temper, polish his manners and help him become a virtuous king. He left all domestic affairs to me and often consulted me in state matters.

I tried to improve my adopted country by promoting the arts and education. For religious reform, I instigated synods and was present for the discussions which tried to correct religious abuses common among priests and people, such as simony, usury and incestuous marriages. I used my position to work for justice and improved conditions for the poor. With my husband, I founded several churches.

Malcolm and I had six sons and two daughters. I personally supervised their religious instruction and their other studies.

In spite of everything, I remained detached from the world. My private life was austere. I prayed and read the Scriptures. I ate sparingly and slept little in order to have time for devotions. I visited and nursed the sick. Malcolm and I kept two Lents, one before Easter and one before Christmas, during which time I always rose at midnight for Mass, washed the feet of beggars, and fed the poor.

I died in 1093. Four days earlier, our castle had been attacked by King William Rufus, and my husband and my oldest son, Edward, were killed. I thanked God even for this huge tragedy.