



## St Elisabeth of Thuringia

Once upon a time in a castle in Hungary, a daughter was born to King Andrew and his wife. They named the child Elisabeth and planned for her a life of comfort and wealth. At this time in 1221, it was normal for girls to marry at a young age. Elisabeth was only 14 when she married a German prince called Ludwig the 4<sup>th</sup>. They were married in St George's Church in Eisenach. Eisenach is in the German state of Thuringia. Elisabeth and her husband lived in the very famous castle called the Wartburg.

The young Elisabeth had a good heart and had heard about the St Francis of Assisi. St Francis believed in giving away all his clothes and everything else that he owned. He cared for the sick people and lived as a poor man to be like them. As a princess, Elisabeth used her power and her wealth to help the poor people of her land. She gave away many of her clothes and helped to feed the hungry. There are many legends about Elisabeth. The most famous legend is this:

*One day, Ludwig was riding home from hunting and met his wife Elisabeth walking down the hill from their castle carrying a basket of bread.*

*„What is in your basket?“ he asked.*

*„Flowers“, she replied blushing.*

*Ludwig did not believe his wife and climbed down from his horse to look in the basket.*

*Elisabeth was amazed that as her husband lifted the cloth from the basket they saw a large bunch of beautiful roses. The bread that she had been smuggling to feed the poor had been miraculously transformed into flowers!*

Other stories tell us about her work with the sick and homeless people. Elisabeth built a hospital below Wartburg Castle. Here she helped the Franciscan nuns to care for the many poor people who were sick. She even washed the feet of the patients and kissed their wounds.

In 1227 her husband died. Together with her children, Elisabeth was forced to leave her home. She chose to become a nun in the Holy Order of St. Francis and to lead a simple life.

Elisabeth is remembered today for her many charitable works. Elisabeth was only 24 when she died but at least 100 miracles were recorded in her name and she was made a saint 3 years after her death.