

The Morning Star

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The Short Life of Elizabeth, Princess of Hungary

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The short life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary—she was 24 when she died in 1231—belies her importance as a saint and exemplar of a particular, if rather odd, form of radical discipleship. (But all saints are odd, by definition.) The bare facts of her story are easily told. The daughter of King Andrew II of Hungary, Elizabeth was sent at a young age to the court of Thuringia to be betrothed to Landgrave Louis IV; the two were married in 1221. It was a happy marriage,

and when Elizabeth—influenced, it seems, by the new Franciscan movement—became interested in charitable work among the poor, Louis supported her efforts. Their relationship is illustrated by the famous story in which he came across Elizabeth on her way to deliver bread to the poor, and asked to see what she had concealed under her cloak. When the cloak fell open, the bread had turned to roses. The incident helped convince Louis that his wife's ministry was willed by God. It is worth noting that Louis and Elizabeth lived in the Wartburg, the castle where centuries later Martin Luther hid out while he was translating the New Testament into German.

In 1227 Louis died in Italy, on his way to fight in the Sixth Crusade. After this, Elizabeth's story takes a rather different turn. The major figure in her life now becomes one Konrad of Marburg, a well-known preacher, ascetic, and heresy-hunter (he had a role in the persecution of the Albigensian sect, an episode that Simone Weil saw as one of the more shameful in medieval church history). Already during her husband's lifetime Elizabeth had been subject to Konrad as her spiritual director and confessor. As a widow she moved to Marburg and adopted a quasi-monastic lifestyle under Konrad's direction; the disciplines he imposed were famously harsh, including beatings administered at his hand. She also sought every opportunity to renounce her wealth and social status.

Refusing her family's plea that she remarry, Elizabeth carried on her charitable works in Marburg, founding a hospital there. In Konrad's deposition for Elizabeth's "cause" as a saint, he relates the following incidents:

There in that town she built a kind of a hospital, taking in the sick and the weak. She placed the most miserable and contemptible people at her table and when I reprimanded her about it, she responded that she received from them a singular grace and humility. Like a prudent woman—which she most certainly was—she called my attention to the life that she lived before, saying that it was necessary for her to cure one extreme with its opposite in just this manner. ... Elizabeth gathered to herself, among others, a paralyzed boy, who had been deprived of his father and mother and who struggled with a constant flow of blood, and

put him each night in her bed for the sake of her own spiritual training. ... After that boy died, she took on, without my knowledge, the care of a leprous girl and hid her in her own quarters, taking upon herself every duty dictated by humanity. She humbled herself by feeding her, laying her down, washing her, and even removing her shoes, imploring the other members of her household not to be offended by such things. When I discovered this, I punished her severely—may the Lord forgive me—because I feared that she would be infected by contact with the girl. After I had sent away the leper and then left to preach in far-off places, she took in a poor little boy who was so mangy that he did not have a single hair on his head. Her intent was to cure him. And indeed by bathing and treating him—from whom she learned to do this, I do not know—she succeeded in curing him, and this boy was seated at her bedside when she died. (Quoted from Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *The Life and Afterlife of St. Elizabeth of Hungary: Testimony from her Canonization Hearings*, Oxford University Press, 2010).

The episode about the paralyzed boy is reminiscent of the famous story in which Elizabeth places a leper in her and her husband's bed. When a horrified Louis pulled back the bedclothes, it is said that he discovered not the leper but the crucified body of Jesus.

What are we to make of all this? If nothing else, this brief glimpse into Elizabeth's life should serve as a reminder that medieval Christianity operated with a set of assumptions very different from our own. We should be wary of the "perils of modernizing Elizabeth," to steal a line from a famous book by H.J. Cadbury. She was more than just a religious social worker. Although not a cloistered nun, she used her position of privilege to carve out a space for a life of devotion, self-renunciation, and identification with the Crucified. Elizabeth did not love the poor and the sick at a distance. She tended their bodies; she mistreated her own body; this was her way of being close to Jesus. In this sense her story belongs to the story of the deeply embodied and indeed, blood-soaked piety of the Middle Ages, which revealed in crucifixes, suffering, and what medieval historian Carolyn Walker Bynum calls "grooving on gore."

Perhaps this *style* of being Christian is no longer available to us, and for some good reasons. In particular, Konrad's role in Elizabeth's story is likely to strike us as being problematic (after her death, his advocacy of her cause for sainthood allowed him to bask in her glory). Konrad notwithstanding, Elizabeth was very much her own woman—or rather, she was Christ's woman. She did not allow the fact of wealth and noble birth to come between her and the Lord she loved, hidden in the lives of the sick and the suffering. Like her contemporary St. Francis, Elizabeth was alert to the presence of Jesus in the "least of these [his] brothers and sisters." Thanks be to God for her witness.

New Wycliffe Wear...Just in time for Christmas!

New Water Bottles \$15

Wycliffe USB Sticks \$15

New Padfolio \$20

New Blue Journal \$15

Student Council Movie Night

Friday, Dec 7, 7-10pm

\$5 for Pizza & Popcorn



Highlighting New Winter Courses!

“Engaging with Old Testament Narrative: The Book of Chronicles”

(WYB2342H), Mondays, 6:45p-9:45p

Andy Witt

This course will introduce students to the joy and complexity of reading narrative texts in the OT through a careful study of the book of Chronicles. The first few weeks will consider the current academic climate in interpreting Chronicles alongside an introduction to the skillset needed to read biblical narratives. The remainder of the course will engage directly with the book of Chronicles itself, paying careful attention to how Chronicles is both similar and different from Samuel-Kings. Help make Chronicles less neglected in the Church!

Saturday, December 1

4:45 Lessons & Carols

Child care will be available all night, starting with the service.

6:15 Christmas Dinner

Sign-up & tickets for the dinner can be purchased at the Front Desk or on Eventbrite. It is \$10.00 per adult, or \$25.00 for the entire immediate family. Kids will be seated at their own special dinner.

7:30 Talent Show

Sign up for the Talent Show on the Student Council bulletin board!





Women and Paul: What Our Great-Grandmothers Thought

Saturday November 24th, 2018

Wycliffe College

9:30 A.M - 11:30 A.M.

Tickets: \$10 each

www.wycliffecollege.ca/womensbreakfast2018

#wycliffesermons

Nov 22: Judy Paulsen
"Gentleness"

Nov 29: Peter Robinson
"Self-Control"

Dec 6: David Kupp
"Good and Evil" (Mt 7:17-19)

THE VISIBLE SHAPE OF
CHRIST'S LIFE IN US



This Wednesday

**3:00 M.Div. Integrative Learning Assessment
("The Comps")**

*Hear about how the Comps will look like this year,
and what their benefits to students & the College*

4:45 EUCHARIST (homilist: Andrew Stuart)

6:00 COMMUNITY DINNER



Mark Your Calendar!

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|--|---------------------------------|---|---|---|--|---|
| 18 <i>AAR/SBL (Denver)</i> | 19 <i>AAR/SBL (Denver)</i> | 20 Morning Prayer: Muriel Tse <i>AAR/SBL (Denver)</i> | 21 3:00 Event: Integrative Learning Assessment 4:45 Eucharist: Andrew Stuart 6:00 Community Dinner | 22 Morning Prayer: Judy Paulsen Evening Prayer: Bridget Poole | 23 | 24 <i>Women's Breakfast</i> |
| 25 | 26 | 27 Morning Prayer: David Butorac | 28 3:00 Event: TBA 4:45 Eucharist: Andrew Stirling 6:00 Community Dinner | 29 Morning Prayer: Peter Robinson Evening Prayer: Glen Taylor | 30 <i>Theology in the Pub</i> | Dec 1 <i>Lessons & Carols Christmas Dinner Talent Show</i> |
| 2 | 3 | 4 Morning Prayer: Ruth Bartlett | 5 <i>Final Eucharist & Community Dinner of the Terms</i> 4:45 Eucharist: 6:00 Community Dinner | 6 Morning Prayer: David Kupp Evening Prayer: Glen Taylor | 7 <i>Student Council Movie Night: Won't You Be My Neighbor?</i> | 8 |
| 9 | 10 <i>Last Day of Class!</i> | 11 <i>Morning Prayer only</i> | 12 <i>Morning Prayer only</i> | 13 <i>Morning Prayer only</i> | 14 <i>Morning Prayer only</i> | 15 |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #d9e1f2; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> Finals Week </div> | | | | | | |

Chapel Service Schedule

CHAPEL SERVICE TIMES

Morning Prayer
Mon-Fri, 8:30a

Wine Before Breakfast
Tue, 7:22a

Taize Evening Prayer
Mon, 5:30p

Sung Evensong
Tue, 5:30p

Community Eucharist
Wed, 4:45p

Prayer & Praise
Thu, 5:00p

Informal Evening Prayer
Fri, 5:30

| | Service | Sacristan | Officiant / Homilist | Readers, Servers, etc. | Greeters |
|-----|------------|-----------------|-------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| Mon | MP | S. Lawley | E. Radner | K. Baker-Bigauskas; M. Ytsma | L. Hurst |
| | Taize | Z. Bartkus | A. Brownlee | S. Kim | D. Chambers |
| Tue | MP | Z. Bartkus | P. Robinson; M. Tse | M. McPhee | M. McPhee |
| | Evensong | S. Lawley | E. Teel | D. Chambers; J. Mangina | D. Chambers |
| Wed | MP | B. Poole | +SGWA | N. Cunha; R. Henderson | N. Cunha |
| | Eucharist | B. Poole | +SGWA Andrew Stewart | D. Chambers; M. McPhee; S. Lawley; J. Lee | D. Chambers M. McPhee |
| Thu | MP | J. Loe.-Samuels | T. Power; J. Paulsen | A. McComb; S. Kim | S. Kim; A. McComb |
| | P&P | S. Lawley | R. Bartlett; B. Poole | N. Cunha; M. McPhee | N. Cunha |
| Fri | MP | J. Loe.-Samuels | A. Brownlee | M. Taylor; K. Moolman | A. McComb |
| | Inform. EP | | M. Lyons | M. McPhee; L. MacKichan | L. MacKichan |



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