

Saint Isabelle of France

Date of birth: March, 1225

City of birth: Paris

Date of Death: February 23, 1270

Feast day: February 26th



Isabelle was a French princess, the daughter of Louis VIII of France and Blanche of Castile. Her father died when she was two years old, it was her mother who saw over her education.

Isabelle could read both Latin^[3] and the vernacular, and enjoyed tales of chivalry as well as devotional texts. While pursuing the traditional feminine interests such as embroidery, she took special pleasure in working on priestly vestments. As a child, she requested spiritual direction and became even more devoted to the Lord under the guidance of the Franciscans.

By virtue of the Treaty of Vendôme in March 1227, Isabelle was betrothed to [Hugh](#), eldest son and heir of [Hugh X of Lusignan](#), with the marriage contract being signed on June 1230; ^[4] however, she refused to celebrate the formal wedding due to her fixed determination to remain a virgin, although she never became a [nun](#). Later, she refused the hand of [Conrad IV of Germany](#), son of [Frederick II, Holy Roman Emperor](#), although pressed to accept by everyone, even by Innocent IV.^[5]

By the [papal bull](#) of 26 May 1254, [Pope Innocent IV](#) allowed her to retain some [Franciscan](#) friars as her special confessors. She was even more devoted to the Franciscan Order than was her royal brother.^[6]

St. Isabelle continued her [life](#) of [virginity](#) consecrated to God. She ministered to the sick and the poor, and after the death of her mother, founded the Franciscan Monastery of the [Humility](#) of the Blessed Virgin [Mary](#) at Longchamps in Paris. She lived there in austerity but never became a nun and refused to become abbess. She died there on February 23, and her cult was approved in 1521.

Prayer to St. Isabelle

Dear Lord, we thank You for giving us St. Isabelle of France as an example of holiness. Help us to imitate the virtue she showed in her life from the time she was a young girl. St. Isabelle of France, you were known to be pious and virtuous by others at court during your childhood. Though you were surrounded by the worldly concerns of courtly life, you were eager to dedicate your life to God. Please bring my petitions before God whom you served so eagerly! You grew in devotion and piety as you got older. You longed to devote yourself entirely to God as a consecrated virgin. Pray for me, that I may grow in virtue each day of my life. Pray that I may be as eager to devote myself to God as you were. Please also pray for (add your intentions here). St Isabelle of France, pray for us.

What can I do to be more like St. Isabelle ?

1) Young women should turn to and imitate women of strength and moral character. 2) Cultivate your relationship with the Blessed Mother and our Lord and Savior by spending time in silence with them daily. 3) Support, in any way you can, organizations such as Bella Medical Clinic and Christine Ann Center. 4) Send a note of gratitude to any person in your life who has helped you grow spiritually.