

## **St. Louis IX, King of France (O.F.S.) [1214 – August 25, 1270]** **(Feast Day: August 25)**



Louis IX was born in Poissy, France in 1214 to Louis VIII and Blanche of Castille. Louis was crowned king when he was only 12 years old. His mother, however, was entrusted with the actual government of the kingdom during his minority. Meanwhile, Louis was being educated in all the duties of a Christian prince. Among his instructors there were several Franciscan friars, and later on the young king himself joined the Third Order of St Francis. On his twenty-first birthday, he assumed full kingship. He was well known for protecting the French clergy from secular leaders and for strictly enforcing laws against blasphemy. Louis generally remained neutral in international disputes. However, because of a dispute between the Count of Le Marche and the Count of Poitiers, in which Henry III supported the Count of Le Marche, he was forced to go to war with England. In 1242, Louis defeated Henry III at Taillebourg. After the war, he made restitution to the innocent people whose property had been destroyed. He established the Sorbonne (1252) and the monasteries of Rayaumont, Vavert, and Maubuisson. Louis led two crusades, the Sixth and the

Seventh Crusades. He was captured and imprisoned during the Sixth (1244 – 1249). At the onset of the Seventh Crusade in 1270, Louis died of dysentery. Pope Boniface VIII canonized him on August 11, 1297.

### **From a spiritual testament by King Saint Louis IX to his son:**

My dearest son, my first instruction is that you should love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your strength. Without this there is no salvation. Keep yourself, my son, from everything that you know displeases God, that is to say, from every mortal sin. You should permit yourself to be tormented by every kind of martyrdom before you would allow yourself to commit a mortal sin. If the Lord has permitted you to have some trial, bear it willingly and with gratitude, considering that it has happened for your good and that perhaps you well deserved it.

If the Lord bestows upon you any kind of prosperity, thank him humbly and see that you become no worse for it, either through vain pride or anything else, because you ought not to oppose God or offend him in the matter of his gifts. Be kindhearted to the poor, the unfortunate and the afflicted. Give them as much help and consolation as you can.

Thank God for all the benefits he has bestowed upon you, that you may be worthy to receive greater. Always side with the poor rather than with the rich, until you are certain of the truth. Be devout and obedient to our mother the Church of Rome and the Supreme Pontiff as your spiritual father.

In conclusion, dearest son, I give you every blessing that a loving father can give a son. May the three Persons of the Holy Trinity and all the saints protect you from every evil. And may the Lord give you the grace to do his will so that he may be served and honored through you, that in the next life we may together come to see him, love him and praise him unceasingly. Amen.