March 2

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Agnes of Bohemia (1211-1282) nun

On March 2, 1282 Agnes of Bohemia returned to the Father, in the small monastery she had founded on the model of St. Clare's community of San Damiano in Assisi.

Agnes, the thirteenth child of the king of Bohemia, had been engaged several times to powerful princes of other royal families. A series of political problems, followed by her father's death, cancelled the plans others had made for her life.

The event that proved decisive for Agnes's future choice to live in celibacy for the sake of the kingdom of God was the arrival of the first Franciscans in Prague in 1225, when the young princess was fourteen years old. From them Agnes learned of the experience of Clare and her sisters at San Damiano, and was fascinated. She began to live more simply and humbly, serving the poor and needy in the streets of the Bohemian capital.

Her love for this path of radical obedience to the Gospel, which she was beginning to understand to be her calling, helped Agnes find the courage to refuse the marriage that would have made her an empress. In 1234, Clare of Assisi gave her permission to found a convent in the heart of Prague, on the model of San Damiano.

Agnes fought long and hard, as had Clare, so that her community's right to live sine proprio, in "the highest and holiest poverty," would be recognized by the Church. She finally obtained what she had patiently asked and waited for. After founding several organizations to assist the poor and the sick, she spent the last years of her life in her community, living in submission to her sisters and refusing every title or role that would place her above them.

BIBLICAL READINGS
1 Pet 4:7-11; Mt 16:24-27

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:
Chad (d. 672), bishop of Lichfield, missionary

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (23 amsir/yakkatit):
Eusebius the Captain (3rd-4th cent.), martyr (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
John Wesley (d. 1791), preacher of the Revival in England

MARONITES:
John Maron (7th cent.), first Maronite patriarch

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Hesychios the Palatine (d. ca. 303), martyr
Theodotos (d. 315), bishop of Kyrenia
Hermogenes Thaumaturge (d. 1612), patriarch of Moscow (Russian Church)