BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Adalsindis

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: December 25

IN BRIEF

Saint Adalsindis

Youngest daughter of Saint Rictrude, a nun at Marchiennes and Hamage in the seventh century.

Feast day	December 25
Born	c. 642, Ostrevent (region of Douai)
Died	Christmastime, c. 673, Hamage Abbey (Nord, France)
Canonized	immemorial cult (sometimes called blessed)
Era	7th century

In this booklet

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Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Adalsindis

Saint Adalsindis (also spelled Adalsendis) was a seventh-century nun, the youngest child of Saint Adalbald and Saint Rictrude. She entered the monastery of Marchiennes, in the present-day Nord department of France, with her mother, then joined the neighboring abbey of Hamage, which her sister Eusebia governed. She died young, during the Christmas season, around 673. Her feast day is December 25.

Who was Saint Adalsindis?

Adalsindis belonged to an exceptional family: her father, her mother, her brother and her two sisters are all honored as saints. We know her mainly from the *Life of Saint Rictrude*, written in 907 by Hucbald, a monk of Saint-Amand, who gives her only a few lines. Her life was short and hidden. The sources do not agree on the date of her death: around 673 for most, later for others. Some authors call her blessed, others a saint. She received public veneration at Marchiennes from the early Middle Ages, and Benedictine martyrologies list her on December 25.

Key dates

- **c. 642**: Born the last of the four children of Adalbald and Rictrude, in the Ostrevent region near Douai.
- **c. 652**: Her father, Adalbald, is murdered on a journey to Gascony.
- **c. 653**: She enters the monastery of Marchiennes with her mother and her sister Clotsindis.
- **Afterward**: She joins Hamage Abbey, where her sister Eusebia is abbess.
- **Christmas, c. 673**: She dies young, while her mother and her sister Eusebia are still living.

- **Middle Ages**: Her relics are honored in the abbey church of Marchiennes, together with those of her sisters.

A childhood in a family of saints

Adalsindis was born around 642 to Adalbald, a Frankish nobleman whose lands lay in the Ostrevent, and to Saint Rictrude, who came from the southwest of Gaul. She had a brother, Mauront, and two sisters, Eusebia and Clotsindis. The household was deeply Christian: the poor were welcomed there, and Saint Amand, the great missionary of the North, was a guest.

She was about ten years old when her father was murdered. Her mother, pressed to marry again, chose instead to consecrate herself to God and received the veil from the hands of Saint Amand. Soon afterward she entered the monastery of Marchiennes, taking her youngest daughters with her, Adalsindis among them.

Monastic life at Marchiennes and Hamage

Adalsindis grew up in the monastery. There she learned to pray the psalms, to work and to live in community. Later she joined Hamage, a neighboring abbey on the Scarpe River, founded by her great-grandmother, Saint Gertrude. Her sister Eusebia led it: she had become abbess very young, at the death of Gertrude, and governed the community.

No notable event of Adalsindis's life is known. She founded no house, wrote no text and is credited with no miracle. Her holiness is that of daily faithfulness, in the shadow of her mother and her sister, in the midst of a community at prayer.

A death at Christmas

Adalsindis died young, during the Christmas celebrations, around 673. Hucbald reports a moving detail: so as not to disturb the joy of the Nativity, Saint Rictrude held back her tears throughout the feast and waited for the feast of the Holy Innocents, December 28, to mourn the daughter she had lost. This shows a mother who suffers but keeps her trust in God, and who places the feast of Christ above her own sorrow.

Devotion and iconography

The relics of Adalsindis rested in the abbey church of Marchiennes, with those of her sister Clotsindis and, from 1133, of her sister Eusebia. An old inscription in verse, reported in the 17th century by the scholar Arnold de Raisse, shows that they received public veneration there. This devotion ended when the abbey was suppressed during the French Revolution. Adalsindis is shown as a nun, wearing the veil, often beside her mother and her sisters.

What should we remember about Saint Adalsindis?

Adalsindis reminds us that holiness does not need great deeds. A young woman, faithful in prayer and community life, was enough to leave a mark on the memory of the Church. Young people searching for their vocation, Christian families, and parents who have lost a child, like her mother Rictrude, can pray to her.

Where to pray to Saint Adalsindis

- **Marchiennes** (Nord, France): the church of Saint Rictrude, on the site of the abbey where her relics rested.
- **Wandignies-Hamage** (Nord, France): the site of the former abbey of Hamage, where she lived and died.

To pray with her at home, you can use the prayer to Saint Adalsindis or the novena to Saint Adalsindis.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Adalsindis for Young People and Grieving Families

Saint Adalsindis was the youngest daughter of Saint Rictrude. She entered the monastery of Marchiennes as a child with her mother, then became a nun at Hamage beside her sister Eusebia, and died young during the Christmas season, around 673. This prayer is an original composition inspired by her life, not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to her intercession young people searching for their way, religious vocations, and parents grieving the loss of a child.

Prayer to Saint Adalsindis

Saint Adalsindis,
daughter of a family of saints,
you grew up in the shadow of the cloister
and learned, day after day,
prayer, work and life together.

Your life was short and hidden,
yet it was given entirely to God.
You went to him in the days of Christmas,
when the Church sings the birth of the Savior.

Pray for young people who are seeking their vocation,
for families who hand on the faith,
for parents who weep for a child.
Obtain for them the peace your mother found in God,
and the hope of meeting again one day in his presence.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Adalsindis

- On her feast day, December 25, or during the Christmas season.
- For a young woman or young man discerning a vocation.
- For parents who have lost a child or a young person.
- For nuns and religious communities.
- For Christian families, and for brothers and sisters.

A prayer for grieving parents

For a family going through loss, you can say:

Lord, console the parents who weep for their child.
Keep them in your hope, as you kept Saint Rictrude.
Saint Adalsindis, pray for us. Amen.

To prepare for her feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Adalsindis from December 17 to 25, and read the life of Saint Adalsindis.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Adalsindis

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Adalsindis, the youngest daughter of Saint Rictrude, a nun at Marchiennes and then at Hamage, who died young during the Christmas season around 673. It is not an official liturgical text. To end it on her feast day, December 25, begin on December 17: it then accompanies the last days of Advent. You can also pray it at any time of the year.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the Sign of the Cross and present your intention to God. Read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. End with: "Saint Adalsindis, pray for us." The small act proposed each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A family of saints

Adalsindis was born into a family where everyone sought God: her father, her mother, her brother and her sisters are all honored as saints. Holiness is often handed on at home.

Prayer: Lord, bless my family. Make our home a place where we learn to love you.

Today: Pray for each member of your family, naming them one by one.

Day 2: The loss of a father

While still a child, Adalsindis lost her father, murdered on a journey. Grief struck early in her life. God does not prevent every trial, but he never leaves anyone alone.

Prayer: Lord, console children who have lost a parent. Be a Father to them.

Today: Pray for an orphan, or support a charity that helps children.

Day 3: Following her mother

Rictrude chose to consecrate herself to God and entered Marchiennes with her daughters. Adalsindis followed her mother's example. Parents are the first witnesses of faith.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for those who showed me the way. Help parents to be witnesses to their children.

Today: Thank your parents, or pray for them if they have died.

Day 4: The school of the cloister

In the monastery, Adalsindis learned to pray the psalms, to work and to live with others. It is simple things, repeated every day, that shape a heart.

Prayer: Lord, teach me faithfulness in the small things of each day.

Today: Pray a psalm, for example Psalm 23.

Day 5: Beside her sister

Adalsindis joined Hamage, where her sister Eusebia was abbess. She accepted living under the authority of her own sister. Humility makes life together possible.

Prayer: Lord, bless my brothers and sisters. Help us live united, in respect and affection.

Today: Get in touch with a brother, a sister or a cousin.

Day 6: A hidden life

No great deed of Adalsindis is known. Her life was hidden, like the life of Jesus at Nazareth. God sees what no one notices.

Prayer: Lord, let me not seek to be seen, but to please you in secret.

Today: Do an act of kindness without anyone knowing.

Day 7: Waiting for Christmas

The last days of Adalsindis's life were the days of Advent. Every Christian life is a waiting for the Lord who comes.

Prayer: Come, Lord Jesus. Prepare my heart to welcome you.

Today: Take a moment of silence before the Nativity scene or an image of the Nativity.

Day 8: Leaving on a feast day

Adalsindis died young, during the Christmas celebrations. For her, the birth of Christ coincided with her own birth into heaven.

Prayer: Lord, welcome into your light the young who die too soon, and console those who mourn them.

Today: Pray for a young person who has died and for his or her family.

Day 9: The tears of Rictrude

According to Hucbald, Rictrude held back her tears during the days of Christmas, so as not to disturb the joy of the feast, and wept for her daughter on the feast of the Holy Innocents. Faith does not erase grief, but it carries it in hope.

Prayer: Lord, keep me in hope in the midst of tears. Through the intercession of Saint Adalsindis, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Today: Visit someone who is grieving, or write them a few words.

Living the novena with Saint Adalsindis

This novena runs through the last days of Advent and ends on Christmas Day. It can help you live this season simply, as Adalsindis did, away from the bustle. If you pray it after the loss of a child or a loved one, know that Christmas can be a painful time: Saint Rictrude knew it. Entrust your sorrow and your intention each day to the Lord who is coming.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Adalsindis,*
> *daughter of Saint Rictrude and nun of Hamage,*
> *you lived hidden in God*
> *and went to him in the days of Christmas.*
> *Present to the Lord the intention I have carried through these nine days.*
> *Watch over young people and over families,*
> *and console those who weep.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

You can also pray the prayer to Saint Adalsindis at any time, and read the life of Saint Adalsindis.

Credits and sources

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