BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Áed mac Bricc

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: November 10

IN BRIEF

Saint Áed mac Bricc

6th-century Irish bishop and abbot, disciple of Saint Illadan, of the Uí Néill, died 589.

Feast day	November 10
Born	6th century, Ireland (territory of the Cenél Fiachach, present-day Westmeath and Offaly)
Died	589, Ireland
Canonized	immemorial cult
Patron saint of	invoked against headaches

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Áed mac Bricc for Pastors and Those Who Suffer

Novena to Saint Áed mac Bricc

Credits and sources

Booklet offered by Saintspedia, the directory of Catholic saints: lives of the saints, prayers, novenas and places of pilgrimage, at saintspedia.com. Texts written by Saintspedia, except traditional prayers marked as such. Original prayers and novenas are not official liturgical texts. Free booklet, to print and share for personal, family or parish use; please do not sell it.

LIFE

Saint Áed mac Bricc

Saint Áed mac Bricc (also written Aedth Mac Brice, Aod or Aedsin) was an Irish bishop and abbot of the 6th century, a disciple of Saint Illadan. Born into a branch of the great Uí Néill dynasty, he exercised his ministry in the heart of Ireland, in the region of Tullamore, and died, according to the annals, in 589. His feast day is November 10.

Who was Saint Áed mac Bricc?

Áed mac Bricc belongs to the golden age of the Irish saints, the 6th century, when monasteries multiplied across the island a few generations after the mission of Saint Patrick. What we know of him is not abundant and must be read with caution: a few entries in the Irish annals and genealogies, and later hagiographical traditions full of miracle stories. Yet these sources agree on the essentials: a bishop, of princely family, a founder of churches in the center of Ireland, whose cult has remained alive to this day. The French calendar site Nominis, run by the French bishops' conference, lists him on November 10.

Key dates in the life of Áed mac Bricc

- **510-516**: His ancestor, King Fiachu mac Néill, conquers the plain of Mide; his descendants form the Cenél Fiachach, a branch of the southern Uí Néill.
- **6th century**: Born into the Cenél Fiachach, in the line of Criamthann, son of Fiachu.
- **Youth**: He becomes a disciple of Saint Illadan.
- **Later**: He serves as bishop and abbot in Meath, in the region of Tullamore.
- **589**: Dies, according to the Irish annals.

- **Middle Ages**: A Latin Life gathers the accounts of his miracles, and his cult spreads to the north of the island.
- **Today**: He is celebrated on November 10.

A son of the Uí Néill

The Irish genealogies link Áed to the Cenél Fiachach, a dynasty descended from Fiachu mac Néill, a king of the early 6th century, said to be a son of the legendary Niall of the Nine Hostages. This small kingdom covered parts of the present-day counties of Westmeath and Offaly. It was nicknamed Fir Chell, "the men of the churches", so numerous were the churches and monasteries there. Áed was one of these churchmen: instead of following a career of arms and power, like many young nobles of his time, he chose the service of God.

Disciple of Illadan, bishop and abbot

Áed was trained by Saint Illadan, a spiritual master from the same region. In the Irish Church of that time, organized around monasteries, it was not unusual for the same man to be both bishop, responsible for ordinations and the sacraments, and abbot, at the head of a community. Such was the case of Áed, who exercised this double ministry in Meath, in the region of Tullamore. Tradition credits him with founding several churches in his family's territory. According to the annals, he died in 589.

Devotion and traditions

The memory of Áed mac Bricc has been kept through the centuries. A Latin Life, written long after his death, credits him with many miracles, in the manner of the great Irish hagiographies: these should be seen as the expression of his people's veneration rather than as a historical account. Popular tradition

invokes him in particular against headaches. His cult spread beyond the center of the island: a place of pilgrimage is associated with him on the heights of Slieve League, in Donegal. His feast day is November 10.

What can we learn from Saint Áed mac Bricc?

Born into a family of kings, Áed put his life at the service of the Church of his land. He belongs to the generation that made Ireland an "island of saints", where the faith received from Patrick took root in communities of prayer. You can pray to him for bishops and priests, for those who suffer from headaches and persistent pain, and for Ireland.

To pray with him, see the prayer to Saint Áed mac Bricc and the novena to Saint Áed mac Bricc.

Where to pray to Saint Áed mac Bricc

- **Tullamore area** (County Offaly, Ireland): the land where he exercised his ministry as bishop and abbot.
- **Slieve League** (County Donegal, Ireland): the place of pilgrimage that tradition associates with him.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Áed mac Bricc for Pastors and Those Who Suffer

Saint Áed mac Bricc (Aedth Mac Brice), an Irish bishop and abbot of the 6th century and a disciple of Saint Illadan, left behind the ambitions of his princely family to serve the Church in the heart of Ireland; he died in 589. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him pastors, those who suffer from headaches and pain, and the faith of Ireland.

Prayer to Saint Áed mac Bricc

Saint Áed mac Bricc,
son of a family of kings,
you preferred the service of God
to power and honors.
Teach me to seek first the Kingdom
and to serve rather than to rule.

Disciple of Saint Illadan,
you listened to a master before guiding others.
Give me a humble heart, ready to learn,
and watch over our bishops and priests,
shepherds of the people of God.

You who are invoked in pains of the head,
relieve those who suffer
and give them peace of mind.
Keep Ireland and our countries in the faith received from the saints.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Áed mac Bricc

- On his feast day, November 10.
- For relief from a migraine or persistent headaches.
- For bishops, priests and vocations.
- For Ireland and Irish communities around the world.
- When you must choose between ambition and service.

A short invocation

> *Lord, ease those who suffer and keep us in your peace.*
> *Saint Áed mac Bricc, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Áed mac Bricc from November 2 to 10, and read the life of Saint Áed mac Bricc.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Áed mac Bricc

This novena is inspired by the life of Saint Áed mac Bricc (Aedth Mac Brice), an Irish bishop and abbot of the 6th century. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, November 10, begin on November 2. You can also pray it at any other time of the year.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the Sign of the Cross and entrust 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 Áed mac Bricc, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely. Sources on his life are scarce: these meditations draw on what the Irish annals, genealogies and tradition have kept of him.

Day 1: A family of kings

Áed was descended from a king of the Uí Néill. He could have sought power; he chose to serve God.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to put what I have received at the service of your Kingdom.

Act of the day: Thank God for your family and pray for each of its members.

Day 2: The land of churches

His family's land was nicknamed "the men of the churches", so much did people pray there. Faith is also handed on through places and communities.

Prayer: Lord, bless our parishes and make them homes of prayer.

Act of the day: Take part in an activity of your parish.

Day 3: Disciple of a master

Áed was trained by Saint Illadan. Before guiding others, he learned to listen.

Prayer: Lord, give me the humility to learn and to receive advice.

Act of the day: Thank someone who helped you grow in faith.

Day 4: Bishop and abbot

Áed was both bishop and abbot, shepherd of a people and father of a community. He carried a double charge in the service of all.

Prayer: Lord, support our bishops and priests, and give them the hearts of fathers.

Act of the day: Pray by name for your bishop and your parish priest.

Day 5: Building the Church

Tradition credits him with founding churches in his family's land. Every church built is a place where God can be met.

Prayer: Lord, make me a living stone of your Church.

Act of the day: Go into a church and pray there for a few minutes.

Day 6: Relieving those who suffer

Tradition invokes Saint Áed against headaches. Pain, even ordinary pain, can weigh heavily on a life.

Prayer: Lord, relieve those who suffer in body and mind.

Act of the day: Show some attention to someone who is tired or unwell.

Day 7: The island of saints

Áed belongs to the generation that made Ireland a land of saints, a few decades after Saint Patrick.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the saints who carried the Gospel to us. Raise up saints today.

Act of the day: Read the life of an Irish saint, such as Saint Patrick or Saint Columba.

Day 8: A cult that travels

His memory spread as far as the cliffs of Slieve League, in the north of the island. Holiness goes beyond the borders of a country or a family.

Prayer: Lord, make me a witness of your peace wherever I go.

Act of the day: Pray for the Christians of Ireland and for Irish emigrants around the world.

Day 9: A life given to the end

Áed died in 589, after a life consecrated to God and to his people. His feast, on November 10, reminds us that faithfulness bears fruit for centuries.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to serve you faithfully to the end. Through the intercession of Saint Áed mac Bricc, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass and pray for your departed.

Living the novena with Saint Áed mac Bricc

We know little about Saint Áed, but we know the essentials: a son of kings who became a shepherd, a disciple who became a master, a saint whom Ireland still remembers. During these nine days, you can carry bishops and priests, those

who suffer from persistent pain, and Ireland.

Closing prayer

Saint Áed mac Bricc,
bishop and abbot of the land of Ireland,
you preferred the service of God to the honors of the world
and built his Church among your people.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Relieve those who suffer
and keep us faithful to the faith of the saints.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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