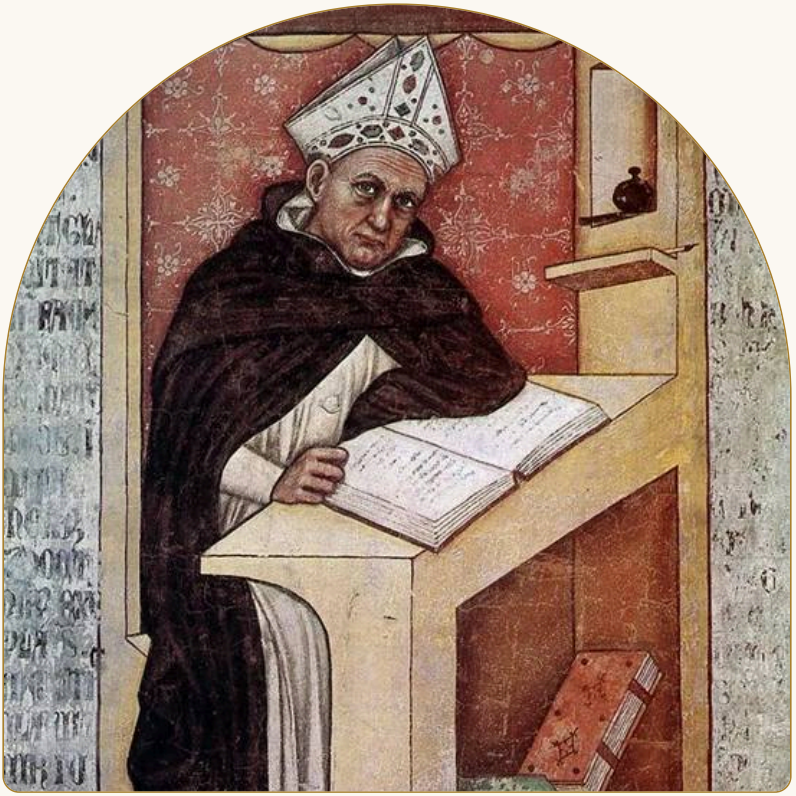


BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Albert the Great

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: November 15

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IN BRIEF

Saint Albert the Great

German Dominican, theologian and scientist, teacher of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Doctor of the Church.

Feast day	November 15
Born	c. 1200, Lauingen (Swabia, now Bavaria, Germany)
Died	November 15, 1280, Cologne, Germany
Canonized	December 16, 1931, by Pope Pius XI, who also proclaimed him a Doctor of the Church
Era	13th century
Patron saint of	scientists, natural sciences, students

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Albert the Great for Study and Science

Novena to Saint Albert the Great

Church of Saint Andrew in Cologne, Tomb of Saint Albert the Great

Credits and sources

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LIFE

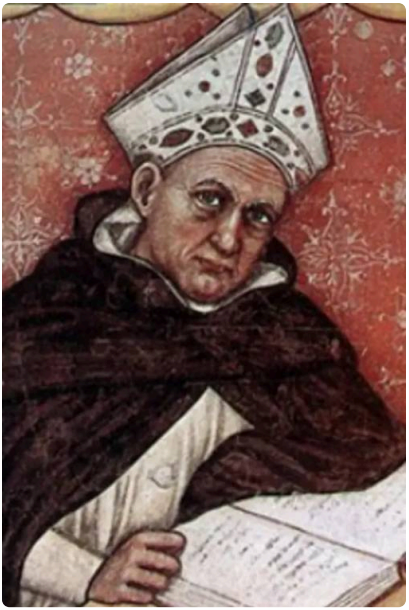
Saint Albert the Great

Saint Albert the Great (Albertus Magnus) was a thirteenth-century German Dominican friar who was at once a theologian, a philosopher and a tireless observer of nature. As a professor in Paris and Cologne, he taught Saint Thomas Aquinas and did more than anyone else to bring the thought of Aristotle into the Christian university. He served for two years as bishop of Regensburg and died in Cologne on November 15, 1280. Canonized and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1931, he is celebrated on November 15.

Who was Saint Albert the Great?

Albert was born around 1200 in Lauingen, on the Danube, in Swabia, into a family of knights. His exact date of birth is unknown: historians hesitate between the last decade of the twelfth century and the first years of the thirteenth. As a young man he went to study in Italy, at Padua, where he discovered the liberal arts and medicine. There he met the Order of Preachers, founded a few years earlier by Saint Dominic, and joined it, drawn in particular by the preaching of Jordan of Saxony, the founder's successor.

His contemporaries called him "the Great" during his own lifetime because of the breadth of his learning, and later generations gave him the title of "Universal Doctor." He wrote about almost everything: Scripture, theology, logic and ethics, but also plants, animals, minerals, astronomy and geography.



Albert the Great, by Tommaso da Modena, chapter house of San Nicolò in Treviso (1352).

Key dates in the life of Saint Albert the Great

- **c. 1200**: Born in Lauingen, Swabia.
- **c. 1223**: Enters the Dominican order in Padua.
- **1230s**: Teaches in several priories in Germany, including Hildesheim, Freiburg, Regensburg and Strasbourg.
- **c. 1245-1248**: Master of theology at the University of Paris; Thomas Aquinas becomes his student.
- **1248**: Founds the Dominican *studium generale* in Cologne, where Thomas follows him.
- **1254-1257**: Provincial of the Dominicans of Germany (the province of Teutonia).
- **1260-1262**: Bishop of Regensburg, before resigning to return to study.

- **1263-1264**: At the request of Pope Urban IV, he preaches the crusade in Germany and Bohemia.
- **1274**: Takes part in the Second Council of Lyon.
- **November 15, 1280**: Dies at the Dominican priory in Cologne.
- **1622**: Beatified by Pope Gregory XV.
- **December 16, 1931**: Pope Pius XI canonizes him and proclaims him a Doctor of the Church.
- **1941**: Pope Pius XII declares him patron of the natural sciences.

The teacher and his student: Albert and Thomas Aquinas

In Paris, in the 1240s, Albert taught at the priory of Saint-Jacques. Among his students was a large, silent young Italian whom his classmates nicknamed "the dumb ox." According to a story told by Thomas's earliest biographers, Albert replied: "You call him the dumb ox, but one day his bellowing will be heard throughout the world." Whether or not the words are exact, the anecdote captures the teacher's insight.

In 1248 Albert left to establish the Dominicans' advanced studies in Cologne and took Thomas with him. Their friendship lasted all their lives. Thomas died in 1274, six years before his teacher. According to one tradition, the aged Albert still defended the thought of his former student when it came under attack in Paris in 1277. Historians debate whether he really made that journey, but Albert's attachment to Thomas's work is beyond doubt.

A scientist of the natural world

Albert set himself the task of making the whole of Aristotle's works, then being rediscovered, accessible to Latin readers, commenting on them and completing them. He did not simply repeat the ancient authors. In his treatises on plants, animals and minerals, he recorded his own observations, made during his many journeys on foot across Europe, and he did not hesitate to

correct the authorities when experience proved them wrong. He wrote, in substance, that natural science does not consist in accepting what others say, but in seeking the causes of things.

For Albert, faith and reason are not rivals: nature is the work of God, and studying it rigorously is a way of honoring him. This is what led Pius XII to make him the patron of those who devote themselves to the natural sciences. Pope Benedict XVI dedicated a general audience to him on March 24, 2010, highlighting this harmony.



Albert the Great, statue by Gerhard Marcks in front of the University of Cologne.

A reluctant bishop, preacher and peacemaker

In 1260 Pope Alexander IV appointed him bishop of Regensburg, a diocese in difficulty. Albert, who traveled on foot like a simple friar, restored order to its administration and finances, then obtained permission to resign as early as 1262 so that he could return to teaching. He nevertheless remained at the

service of the Church: he preached the crusade, consecrated churches, and acted several times as arbiter in disputes, notably between the archbishop of Cologne and the citizens of the city.

He spent his last years in Cologne. His memory, it is said, weakened toward the end of his life. He died on November 15, 1280, and was buried in the Dominican church of the city.

Why is Saint Albert the Great the patron saint of scientists?

Albert is the patron saint of scientists, and more broadly of students of the natural sciences, because Pius XII officially gave him this role in 1941. The choice was not arbitrary. Few medieval thinkers took the observation of nature as seriously as he did, and fewer still combined it with such deep faith. He is also invoked by students, teachers and researchers, and by all who look for harmony between faith and reason. In the English-speaking world, several schools and colleges bear his name, among them Albertus Magnus College in New Haven, Connecticut, founded by Dominican Sisters.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Albert the Great in art

Albert is usually shown in the black and white habit of the Dominicans, often seated at a desk, writing or reading, as in the famous fresco by Tommaso da Modena in Treviso. A book and a pen recall his immense written work. He sometimes wears a bishop's miter, a reminder of his brief time in Regensburg. In some images he appears beside his student Thomas Aquinas.

What his holiness teaches us

Saint Albert the Great shows that a mind curious about everything can also belong to a humble, prayerful heart. He put his intelligence at the service of truth without fearing new knowledge, and he knew how to step aside before a student more brilliant than himself. He accepted responsibilities he had not sought, then left them without regret.

To pray with him, read the prayer to Saint Albert the Great for study and science, or follow the novena to Saint Albert the Great from November 6 to 14, ending on the eve of his feast.



The tomb of Albert the Great in the crypt of Saint Andrew's Church (St. Andreas), Cologne.

Where to pray to Saint Albert the Great

- **Cologne** (Germany): the Romanesque Church of Saint Andrew (St. Andreas), whose crypt holds his tomb.

- **Lauingen** (Bavaria): his hometown, where a statue honors him on the market square.
- **Regensburg** (Bavaria): Saint Peter's Cathedral, the seat of his brief time as bishop.
- **Paris**: the rue Maître-Albert, in the Latin Quarter, keeps the memory of his teaching.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Albert the Great for Study and Science

Saint Albert the Great left an immense body of writing, but no short prayer reliably attributed to him has become part of the tradition. Rather than credit him with an uncertain text, this page offers a psalm verse that expresses his wonder at creation, followed by an original prayer to Saint Albert the Great.

A psalm of creation (Psalm 104:24)

Albert saw the study of nature as a way of recognizing the wisdom of the Creator. This verse from the great psalm of creation sums up that conviction. Translation from the Hebrew by Saintspedia; the biblical text is in the public domain.

> *How many are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.*

Source: Book of Psalms, Psalm 104 in the Hebrew numbering (103 in the Greek and Latin numbering), verse 24.

Prayer to Saint Albert the Great for study and science

Saint Albert, you loved the truth in all its forms, and you read the wisdom of God in Scripture as well as in plants, stones and stars: pray for me.

Give me a love of study and the patience to do my work well. Keep me from pride in my knowledge, and teach me to seek without fear, to observe with care, and to admit humbly what I do not know.

You were the teacher and friend of Saint Thomas Aquinas: I entrust to you students and those who teach them, researchers, doctors, and all who work to understand the world. I also entrust to you my own intention: (name it in silence).

Help us never to separate intelligence and faith, and to make our knowledge a service to our brothers and sisters and a song of praise to the Creator. Amen.

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia, free to use for personal and community prayer.

When to pray this prayer

Saint Albert the Great is celebrated on November 15, the anniversary of his death in Cologne in 1280. You can pray to him before an exam, at the start of a school year, or when beginning a research project. Scientists, engineers, doctors and teachers may also pray it at the start of a working day, asking that their work serve the truth and the good of others.

For a longer time of prayer, follow the novena to Saint Albert the Great, and discover the life of Saint Albert the Great.

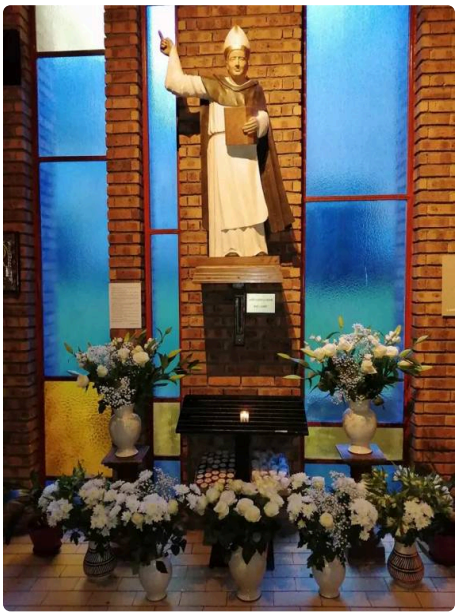
NOVENA

Novena to Saint Albert the Great

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life and work of Saint Albert the Great. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on the eve of his feast, begin on November 6; it then ends on November 14, the day before his feast on November 15. You can also pray it at any time of the year, for example before exams or at the start of a research project.

How to pray this novena

Each day, entrust your intention to God, read the meditation, then say the prayer of the day followed by an Our Father. The small act suggested for each day helps you connect prayer with study, work and daily life.



Saint Albert the Great, church statue.

Day 1: The desire to know

As a young student in Padua, Albert discovered the joy of learning. This desire to know is a gift from God, who made human beings capable of seeking the truth. Curiosity is not a distraction from faith: when it is humble and honest, it leads us toward the One who is Truth itself. Today, let us ask for a mind that stays open and eager to learn.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the intelligence you have given me. Keep alive in me the desire to understand.

Today: Learn something new, and thank God for being able to do so.

Day 2: Answering the call

In Padua, Albert heard the preaching of the friars of Saint Dominic and chose to follow them. He put his learning at the service of proclaiming the Gospel. His knowledge did not stay a private treasure: it became a way of serving the Church and helping others to believe. Each of us has received gifts that are meant to be shared.

Prayer: Lord, show me how to place my talents at the service of your Kingdom.

Today: Pray for religious vocations, especially in the orders of preachers.

Day 3: Contemplating creation

On his travels, Albert observed plants, animals and stones. For him, nature was a book written by God, one that we must learn to read. He walked the roads of Europe on foot, and those long journeys became occasions for patient observation. Looking closely at the created world can become a form of prayer and gratitude.

Prayer: Creator of all things, open my eyes to the beauty of your work and teach me to respect it.

Today: Spend some time outdoors, silently observing a tree, a flower or the sky.

Day 4: Seeking the causes

Albert did not merely repeat what he had read: he checked, compared and corrected. This intellectual honesty is a form of love for the truth. In an age of rumors and quick opinions, his example invites us to slow down, to look for reliable sources, and to change our minds when the facts require it.

Prayer: Spirit of truth, give me rigor and honesty in my work, and keep me from hasty judgments.

Today: Check a piece of information before passing it on.

Day 5: The teacher and the student

Albert recognized the genius of Thomas Aquinas early on and supported him all his life. He rejoiced to see his student surpass him. True teachers do not cling to their own glory; they want their students to grow. Let us give thanks for those who formed us and ask for a heart free from envy.

Prayer: Lord, bless those who have taught me. Help me to rejoice in the success of others, without jealousy.

Today: Thank a teacher or mentor who has made a difference in your life.



Saint Andrew's Church (St. Andreas) in Cologne, where Saint Albert the Great rests.

Day 6: Faith and reason

For Albert, faith and reason do not fight each other: both come from God. All his life he tried to bring them into dialogue. He was convinced that the truth discovered by reason can never contradict the truth revealed by God. Our questions, then, need not frighten us: they can deepen our faith.

Prayer: Lord, give me a faith that thinks and an intelligence that opens itself to you.

Today: Read a page by a Christian author on a question that troubles or interests you.

Day 7: Serving where we are called

Albert agreed to become provincial, then bishop of Regensburg, although he preferred study. He set things in order, then asked to be relieved of his office. He did not seek power, and he did not cling to it. His freedom shows us how to serve generously without making our position the center of our life.

Prayer: Lord, make me available for the responsibilities you entrust to me, and free to leave them when the time comes.

Today: Do a favor you have been putting off.

Day 8: Making peace

Several times Albert served as an arbiter in disputes, in Cologne and elsewhere. The scholar also knew how to listen to both sides and seek justice. Peace is not only the absence of conflict; it is built patiently, through listening, fairness and good will. Every family, workplace and parish needs such peacemakers.

Prayer: God of peace, make me an instrument of reconciliation wherever there is tension.

Today: Take the first step toward someone with whom you disagree.

Day 9: Humility at the end of life

At the end of his life, the "Universal Doctor" gradually lost his memory. The man who had known so much entrusted himself entirely to God. Old age, illness and the loss of our abilities can be lived as a final act of trust. Our worth before God does not depend on what we know or what we can still do.

Prayer: Lord, at the end of this novena, I place my intention in your hands. Through the intercession of Saint Albert the Great, teach me to receive everything from you, my knowledge as well as my limits. Amen.

Today: Visit or call an elderly or sick person.

Closing prayer

Saint Albert the Great, you loved wisdom and contemplated the work of the Creator. I entrust to you the intention of these nine days. Pray for students, teachers and researchers. Obtain for us the grace to seek the truth with humility and to serve it with joy. Amen.

To go further: the life of Saint Albert the Great and the prayer to Saint Albert the Great for study and science.

PILGRIMAGE

Church of Saint Andrew in Cologne, Tomb of Saint Albert the Great

The Church of Saint Andrew (St. Andreas), in the heart of Cologne a short walk from the cathedral, houses the tomb of Saint Albert the Great. It is the main pilgrimage site devoted to the teacher of Saint Thomas Aquinas, in the city where he taught, founded Dominican studies, and spent his last years.

How Albert's relics came to Saint Andrew's

When he died in 1280, Albert was buried in the church of the Dominican convent in Cologne, where he had lived and taught. In the early 19th century, after the secularization of convents under the French occupation, that church was deconsecrated and then demolished, and his remains were moved in 1804 to the nearby Church of Saint Andrew. After the Second World War, the Dominicans returned to Saint Andrew's, and in 1954 the saint's relics were placed in an ancient sarcophagus in the crypt.



The Church of Saint Andrew in Cologne.

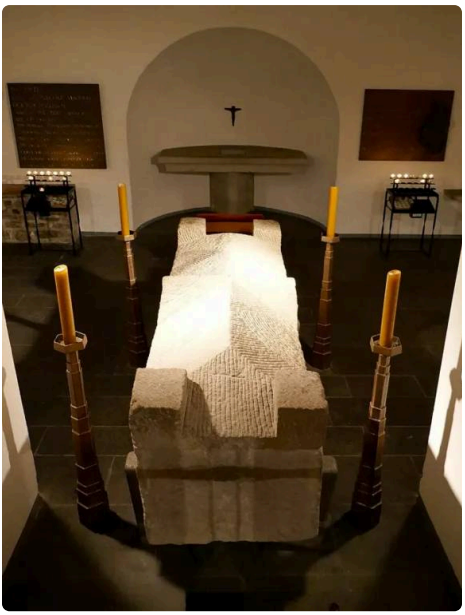
The Romanesque Church of Saint Andrew

Saint Andrew's is one of the twelve great Romanesque churches of Cologne. Founded in the 10th century, it preserves a Romanesque nave and a Gothic choir added at the end of the Middle Ages. The church was badly damaged during the war and later restored. Today it is served by the Dominicans, which keeps the memory of Albert especially alive: the community celebrates his feast there every year on November 15.

Praying at the tomb of Saint Albert

Before your visit, you may wish to reread the life of Saint Albert the Great. In the crypt, a time of silence before the sarcophagus is a good moment to entrust to him your studies, your work, or a research project in progress. The prayer to

Saint Albert the Great for study and learning fits this moment well. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.



The tomb of Saint Albert the Great, in the crypt of Saint Andrew's in Cologne.

Other places connected with Saint Albert the Great

- **Cologne**: the statue of Albert by Gerhard Marcks in front of the main building of the university, and the cathedral, whose construction began in 1248, the year he arrived in the city.
- **Lauingen** (Bavaria): his hometown on the Danube, which honors him with a statue in the market square.
- **Regensburg** (Bavaria): the Cathedral of Saint Peter, seat of the diocese he governed from 1260 to 1262.
- **Paris**: the Rue Maître-Albert in the Latin Quarter, near where he taught.
- **Treviso** (Italy): the chapter house of the San Nicolò convent, where Tommaso da Modena portrayed him in 1352.

Practical information

The Church of Saint Andrew is in central Cologne, a few minutes' walk from the cathedral and the main train station. Opening hours and Mass times may vary. Check with the parish or the Dominican community before you come, especially if you wish to go down to the crypt.

Credits and sources

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