

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Andrew the Apostle

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: November 30

Saintspedia · saintspedia.com

IN BRIEF

Saint Andrew the Apostle

Fisherman of Bethsaida, brother of Simon Peter, the first disciple called by Jesus according to the Gospel of John, patron saint of Scotland.

Feast day	November 30
Born	Bethsaida, Galilee
Died	1st century, Patras, Greece, according to tradition
Canonized	pre-congregation (venerated since the early Church)
Era	1st century
Patron saint of	fishermen, Scotland, Greece, Russia, Amalfi

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Andrew and the Saint Andrew Christmas Novena

Novena to Saint Andrew

Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Amalfi, Tomb of the Apostle

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 Andrew the Apostle

Saint Andrew is one of the twelve apostles of Jesus. A fisherman on the Sea of Galilee and the brother of Simon Peter, he was, according to the Gospel of John, the first to follow Jesus, which earned him among the Greeks the beautiful title of *Protokletos*, "the First-Called." Tradition says he was crucified at Patras, in Greece, on a cross that art depicts in the shape of an X. Patron saint of Scotland, Greece and the Patriarchate of Constantinople, he is celebrated on November 30, in East and West alike.

Who was Saint Andrew?

Andrew came from Bethsaida, a fishing village on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee; he later lived in Capernaum with his brother Simon. His name is Greek, *Andreas*, meaning "manly" or "courageous," a sign of Galilee's openness to Greek culture. Before meeting Jesus, he was a disciple of John the Baptist, which shows him to be a seeker, attentive to the signs of God.



The Calling of Peter and Andrew, by Duccio (c. 1308-1311, National Gallery of Art, Washington).

Key dates

- **Early 1st century**: Born in Bethsaida, in Galilee.
- **c. 28**: A disciple of John the Baptist, he follows Jesus by the Jordan and brings his brother Simon to him (John 1:35-42).
- **c. 28-30**: The decisive call by the lake: "I will make you fishers of men" (Mark 1:16-18).
- **c. 30**: Present in the Upper Room with the apostles after the Ascension (Acts 1:13).
- **1st century**: According to ancient traditions, mission in Scythia, around the Black Sea, then in Greece; martyrdom at Patras.
- **357**: His relics are transferred to Constantinople, to the Church of the Holy Apostles.
- **May 8, 1208**: His relics arrive in Amalfi, after the Fourth Crusade.

- **1462**: The apostle's head is entrusted to Pope Pius II in Rome.
- **1964**: Pope Paul VI returns this relic to the Orthodox Church of Patras.

"We have found the Messiah"

The Gospel of John tells of the first meeting with the precision of an eyewitness. John the Baptist sees Jesus passing by and says: "Behold, the Lamb of God." Two of his disciples begin to follow Jesus, who turns and asks them: "What are you looking for?" They answer: "Rabbi, where are you staying?" "Come, and you will see." They stay with him that day, at about four in the afternoon, the evangelist notes. One of these two disciples is Andrew.

His first act is to go and find his brother: "We have found the Messiah." He brings him to Jesus, who gives Simon the name Cephas, Peter. Andrew's whole vocation lies in this movement: meeting Christ and not keeping that meeting to himself. Mark and Matthew then report the decisive call by the lake: the two brothers immediately leave their nets.

The one who brings others to Jesus

At the multiplication of the loaves, it is Andrew who points out a boy with five barley loaves and two fish, adding realistically: "But what good are these for so many?" (John 6:8-9). A few days before the Passion, some Greeks who had come up to Jerusalem for the feast approach Philip, who tells Andrew; together they go and tell Jesus (John 12:20-22).

After Pentecost, the New Testament says nothing more about him, and traditions take over. Origen, quoted by the historian Eusebius of Caesarea in the 4th century, says that Andrew received Scythia, the lands north of the Black Sea. Other accounts take him to Asia Minor and Greece, and a medieval Russian chronicle has him climb the hills where Kyiv would one day stand. These stories cannot be verified, but they explain the veneration the peoples of the East have for him.

The cross of Patras

The *Acts of Andrew*, an apocryphal writing probably composed in the 2nd or 3rd century, tell of his death at Patras, in the Peloponnese. The proconsul Aegeates, angered by his wife's conversion, had him tied to a cross rather than nailed, to prolong his agony. Andrew is said to have greeted the cross as a long-desired friend. These details belong to pious legend; only the apostle's death at Patras rests on an ancient and constant tradition.



The Crucifixion of Saint Andrew, by Caravaggio (1606-1607, Cleveland Museum of Art).

Relics between East and West

In 357, Emperor Constantius II had Andrew's remains moved to Constantinople, giving the new capital an apostolic patron, as Rome had Peter. After the sack of the city by the Crusaders in 1204, Cardinal Pietro Capuano, a native of Amalfi, brought the body back to his hometown, where

it was laid in the crypt of the Cathedral of Saint Andrew on May 8, 1208. The apostle's head, which had remained in Patras, was entrusted in 1462 to Pope Pius II by Thomas Palaiologos, who was fleeing the Ottoman advance.

In 1964, Pope Paul VI returned this relic to the Church of Patras, a strong gesture of rapprochement between Catholics and Orthodox. Since then, a delegation of the Holy See has gone every November 30 to the Phanar, in Istanbul, for the feast of the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Why is Saint Andrew the patron saint of Scotland and of fishermen?

Andrew was a fisherman before Jesus called him to become a "fisher of men," so fishermen have always taken him as their patron. Scotland's devotion is linked to the medieval tradition that relics of the apostle were brought there by Saint Rule (Regulus), to the place that became St Andrews. The white saltire on a blue field, the flag of Scotland, is Saint Andrew's cross, and November 30, Saint Andrew's Day, is Scotland's national day.

Saint Andrew reminds us that faith begins with a question ("where are you staying?") and is passed on by simple witness: "we have found." He does not put himself forward; he brings others. He also teaches us to offer the little we have, like the boy's five loaves, and let Christ do more with it. He is invoked for the missions, for Christian unity and for fishermen.

To pray with him, read the prayer to Saint Andrew, with the "O good Cross" antiphon and the Saint Andrew Christmas Novena, or follow the novena to Saint Andrew from November 21 to 29. His feast is linked to Advent: the first Sunday of Advent is traditionally the Sunday nearest to November 30.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Andrew in art

- **An X-shaped cross**, the "Saint Andrew's cross" or saltire, which became established in art only in the late Middle Ages. It then became an emblem: the flag of Scotland, the cross of Burgundy, the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece, founded in 1430 by Philip the Good under the apostle's patronage.
- **A fishing net or fish**, recalling his trade on the Sea of Galilee.
- **An older man with white hair and beard**, often shown beside his brother Peter.

Where to pray to Saint Andrew

- **Amalfi** (Italy): the Cathedral of Saint Andrew, whose crypt has held his relics since 1208.
- **Patras** (Greece): the great Orthodox Basilica of Saint Andrew, which keeps his head and fragments of the cross.
- **Rome**: Saint Peter's Basilica, where the monumental statue of Saint Andrew by François Duquesnoy adorns one of the piers of the dome.
- **St Andrews** (Scotland): the ruins of the medieval cathedral, linked to the tradition of relics brought by Saint Rule.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Andrew and the Saint Andrew Christmas Novena

There is no prayer composed by Saint Andrew himself. The tradition of the Church prays with him through an ancient antiphon, "O bona Crux," drawn from the account of his martyrdom, and many English-speaking Catholics know a popular Advent prayer that begins on his feast day. This page presents both texts, along with an original prayer by Saintspedia to the apostle.

Prayer to Saint Andrew

Saint Andrew, you who left John the Baptist to follow the Lamb of God, and dared to ask him, "Rabbi, where are you staying?", pray for me.

Teach me to seek Christ with your simplicity, and to stay with him long enough to know him. When I have found him, give me your joy in running to tell those close to me, without noise and without pressure.

You who brought to Jesus the boy with five loaves, help me to offer the little I have, even when it seems worthless. Brother of Peter, patron of the Church of the East, pray for the unity of all Christ's disciples. I also entrust to you my intention: (name it in silence).

And when the hour of the cross comes for me, obtain for me the grace to welcome it without fear, as the way that leads to the Master. Amen.

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

"O good Cross": the antiphon of Saint Andrew

According to the *Passion of Andrew*, an ancient but legendary account, the apostle greeted the cross of his execution with these words. The old Roman Breviary drew from them an antiphon sung on November 30. Saintspedia translation from the Latin, which is in the public domain.

> *O good Cross, who received your beauty from the limbs of the Lord,*
>
> *take me from among men and return me to my Master,*
>
> *so that through you he may receive me, who through you redeemed me.*

Source: antiphon for the feast of Saint Andrew, after the tradition of the *Passio Andreae*. These words belong to the traditional account and are not historically attested sayings of the apostle.

The Saint Andrew Christmas Novena

This popular prayer, which spread from Ireland through the English-speaking world in the late 19th century, is traditionally said fifteen times a day from November 30 until Christmas. It is not addressed to Saint Andrew: it simply begins on his feast and meditates on the birth of Christ.

> *Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold.*
>
> *In that hour vouchsafe, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires, through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of his blessed Mother. Amen.*

Source: traditional prayer, author unknown, known as the Saint Andrew Christmas Novena.

When to pray this prayer

Saint Andrew's feast day is November 30, for Catholics and Orthodox alike. It is also Scotland's national day and the patronal feast of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, a good day to pray for Christian unity. For a longer time of prayer, follow the novena to Saint Andrew from November 21 to 29, and read the life of Saint Andrew.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Andrew

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the Gospel passages in which Saint Andrew appears. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on the eve of his feast, begin on November 21; it ends on November 29, just before the apostle's feast on November 30 and the beginning of Advent. You can also pray it at any time of the year, for a vocation, for someone you would like to bring to Christ, or for Christian unity.

How to pray this novena

Each day, entrust your intention to God, read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father. The small act suggested for each day helps carry the prayer into daily life. If you miss a day, simply pick up where you left off. On November 30 itself, you may wish to begin the Saint Andrew Christmas Novena, which accompanies many families through Advent.

Day 1: Seeking

Before meeting Jesus, Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. He was already on the way, attentive and waiting. Faith often begins with a desire we do not yet dare to name. John the Baptist taught Andrew to watch and wait, so that he was ready when the Lamb of God passed by.

Prayer: Lord, keep alive in me the desire to seek you. Do not let me settle into my habits.

Today: Write down, in one sentence, what you truly hope for from God.

Day 2: "What are you looking for?"

The first words of Jesus to Andrew are a question. He imposes nothing: he invites him to look within himself. God respects our freedom and questions us. Behind all our requests lies a deeper desire that only he can fill.

Prayer: Jesus, ask me your question, and help me to answer it truthfully.

Today: Spend ten minutes in silence, letting this question speak to you.

Day 3: "Come, and you will see"

Andrew asks where Jesus is staying, and he stays with him. We do not know Christ by hearsay: we have to spend time with him. The evangelist remembers even the hour, about four in the afternoon: a true meeting leaves its mark.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to remain with you, without hurry and without watching the clock.

Today: Spend some time in a church, before the Blessed Sacrament if possible.

Day 4: "We have found"

Andrew's first instinct is to go and find his brother. The joy of the encounter is shared first with those closest to us, simply, through witness. Andrew did not preach a sermon to Simon; he told him what he had found, and brought him to see for himself.

Prayer: Lord, help me to speak of you to those I love, with tact and without fear.

Today: Pray by name for a member of your family, and reach out to them.

Day 5: Leaving the nets

By the lake, Andrew immediately leaves his nets. Following Christ sometimes means letting go of what keeps us busy and makes us feel secure. Andrew did not lose his skill as a fisherman: Jesus gave it a new purpose.

Prayer: Jesus, show me what I must leave behind to follow you more freely.

Today: Give up, for today, a habit that clutters your day.

Day 6: The five loaves

Andrew presents a boy who has almost nothing, while doubting: "What good are these for so many?" Yet Jesus turns this little into a meal for a crowd.

Prayer: Lord, I offer you the little I have. Do with it what you will.

Today: Share a meal, a gift or some time with someone in need.



Praying with Saint Andrew, apostle.

Day 7: The Greeks who want to see Jesus

Foreigners approach Philip, who goes to find Andrew; together they bring them to Jesus. Andrew knows how to widen the circle to those who come from elsewhere. The Church has always grown through people willing to open the door to strangers.

Prayer: Lord, open my heart to those who are not like me, and make me a bridge toward you.

Today: Welcome with attention a newcomer or a foreigner in your surroundings.

Day 8: Brothers of East and West

Andrew, Peter's brother, became the patron of the Church of Constantinople. The two brothers from Galilee remind us that Christian unity is a family matter.

Prayer: Lord, may they all be one. Heal the divisions among your disciples, beginning with my own.

Today: Pray for Christian unity, or learn about one of the Eastern Churches.

Day 9: The cross welcomed

According to tradition, Andrew greeted the cross of Patras as the way that would bring him back to his Master. The cross is not sought for its own sake: it is passed through out of love.

Prayer: Lord, at the end of this novena, I give you my intention. Through the intercession of Saint Andrew, grant me to carry my cross with trust and to follow you to the end. Amen.

Today: Make the Sign of the Cross slowly, entrusting a present trial to God.

Closing prayer

Saint Andrew, First-Called, I entrust to you the intention of these nine days. Pray for me, for my family and for all who proclaim the Gospel. Obtain for us the grace to seek Christ, to remain with him and to make him known. Amen.

To go further: the life of Saint Andrew and the prayer to Saint Andrew.

PILGRIMAGE

Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Amalfi, Tomb of the Apostle

The Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Amalfi, on the Amalfi Coast south of Naples, has housed the relics of the Apostle Andrew in its crypt since 1208. Overlooking the little town from the top of its great staircase, it is the main Catholic pilgrimage site devoted to the brother of Saint Peter.

How Andrew's relics came to Amalfi

After his death in Patras, according to tradition, Andrew's body was transferred in 357 to Constantinople, to the Church of the Holy Apostles, where it remained for nearly nine centuries. In 1204, the Fourth Crusade seized and sacked the city, and many relics then left for the West. Cardinal Pietro Capuano, a papal legate from Amalfi, obtained those of the Apostle and had them brought to his hometown. They were welcomed there on May 8, 1208, and placed in the crypt of the cathedral, which already bore the name of Saint Andrew.



Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Amalfi, tomb of the Apostle.

The cathedral and the Cloister of Paradise

The present cathedral layers several eras: a medieval building with Byzantine and Arab-Norman influences, an interior remodeled in the Baroque period, and a polychrome façade rebuilt in the 19th century after the old one collapsed. Its bronze doors, cast in Constantinople in the 11th century, recall the trade ties between the maritime republic of Amalfi and the East. Next door, the Cloister of Paradise, with its interlaced arches of Eastern inspiration, served in the 13th century as a cemetery for the city's noble families.

The crypt of Saint Andrew

Beneath the choir, the crypt, richly decorated with frescoes and marble in the early 17th century, holds the tomb of the Apostle, topped by a large bronze statue showing him with his X-shaped cross. An old tradition reports that a

liquid, called the "manna of Saint Andrew," forms on the relics; it is collected on certain dates and venerated by the faithful of the coast. The Church has never made it an article of faith: it is a local devotion.

Praying at the tomb of Saint Andrew

Before your visit, you may wish to reread the life of Saint Andrew or the first chapter of the Gospel of John, which tells of his meeting with Jesus. In the crypt, a time of silence before the tomb is a good moment to entrust an intention to him, for example for a brother, a sister, or a loved one to whom you would like to hand on the faith. The antiphon "O Good Cross," offered on the page prayer to Saint Andrew, fits this moment well. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Other places connected with Saint Andrew

- **Patras** (Greece): the Orthodox Basilica of Saint Andrew, one of the largest churches in Greece, which preserves his head, returned by Paul VI in 1964, and fragments of the cross.
- **Rome**: Saint Peter's Basilica, where the statue of Saint Andrew by François Duquesnoy recalls that his head was venerated there from 1462 to 1964.
- **Istanbul**: the Phanar, seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, which celebrates its patronal feast on November 30.
- **St Andrews** (Scotland): the ruins of the medieval cathedral, once the main shrine of the kingdom of Scotland.
- **Bethsaida and Capernaum** (Galilee): the places of his youth and his call, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Practical information

Amalfi can be reached by the coastal road, which is narrow and often crowded in summer, or by boat from Salerno, Positano, or Naples depending on the season. The cathedral stands on the town's main square. On November 30 and on June 27, the day the town commemorates the Apostle's protection during a storm that scattered an enemy fleet in 1544, celebrations and a procession are held. Access conditions for the crypt and the cloister, as well as Mass times, should be checked with the cathedral before you come.

CREDITS

Credits and sources

Texts: Saintspedia (saintspedia.com). The sources cited in each part are those of the corresponding page of the website. Biographical data partly from Wikidata (CC0). Font: EB Garamond (SIL Open Font License).

Images

- Cover: Juan Correa de Vivar, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. Source · License
- The Calling of Peter and Andrew, by Duccio (c. 1308-1311, National Gallery of Art, Washington).: Image: Duccio di Buoninsegna, CC0, via Wikimedia Commons. Source · License
- The Crucifixion of Saint Andrew, by Caravaggio (1606-1607, Cleveland Museum of Art).: Image: Caravaggio, public domain, via Wikimedia Commons. Source · License
- Praying with Saint Andrew, apostle.: Image: Bjankuloski06, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons. Source · License
- Cathedral of Saint Andrew in Amalfi, tomb of the Apostle.: Image: Luca Aless, CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons. Source · License



More free booklets

Lives of the saints, prayers, novenas and places of pilgrimage: find all the booklets to print at

saintspedia.com