BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Andronicus

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: May 17

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IN BRIEF

Saint Andronicus

1st-century Christian, relative and fellow prisoner of Saint Paul, bishop in Pannonia according to tradition.

Feast day	May 17
Born	1st century
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	1st century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Andronicus for Missionaries and Imprisoned Christians

Novena to Saint Andronicus

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Andronicus

Saint Andronicus was a Christian of the 1st century, a disciple and fellow prisoner of the apostle Paul, who greets him together with Junia at the end of the Letter to the Romans. Eastern tradition counts him among the seventy disciples of the Lord and makes him a bishop in Pannonia. He is celebrated with Saint Junia on May 17.

Who was Saint Andronicus?

Andronicus is one of the many Christians of the first generations of whom the New Testament keeps only the name, but a name accompanied by remarkable praise. All that we know for certain about him fits into one verse of Saint Paul. The rest comes from the tradition of the Eastern Churches, which sought to fill in his life and death. We must therefore clearly distinguish what Scripture says from what tradition reports, which is later and more uncertain.

Key dates in the life of Andronicus

- **Before about 35**: According to Paul, he became a disciple of Christ before him, probably in Jerusalem.
- **Unknown date**: At some point he shares the imprisonment of the apostle Paul, for the Gospel.
- **c. 57**: Paul greets him, with Junia, in his letter to the Christians of Rome (Romans 16:7).
- **According to tradition**: He is one of the seventy disciples sent out by Christ.
- **According to tradition**: He proclaims the Gospel in the Roman Empire and becomes a bishop in Pannonia.

- **Unknown date**: He dies, a martyr according to the office of the Orthodox Churches.
- **5th century**: Under the emperors Arcadius and Honorius, relics attributed to him are discovered near Constantinople, and a church is built on the spot.

What Saint Paul says

At the end of the Letter to the Romans, Paul greets a long list of Christians. Among them he writes: "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, and who were in Christ before me." This verse says a great deal in a few words.

Andronicus is a "relative" of Paul: the word can mean a member of his family, but more probably a fellow Jew. He was imprisoned with him for Christ, though we do not know where or when. He was held in high regard among the apostles, that is, among the first missionaries of the Gospel. Finally, he became a Christian before Paul, and so in the very first years of the Church, probably in the community of Jerusalem.

Andronicus and Junia

Andronicus is always named with Junia. Manuscripts and translations have hesitated over this name, which some read as that of a man, Junias. Ancient tradition rather saw a woman in her, and often the wife of Andronicus. They would then form a missionary couple, like Aquila and Priscilla, other friends of Paul. The Churches celebrate them together.

What tradition reports

The Eastern Churches count Andronicus among the seventy disciples whom Christ sent ahead of him, according to the Gospel of Luke. Tradition credits him with great missionary activity in the Roman Empire and presents him as

bishop of Pannonia, a province on the Danube, in present-day Hungary and its surroundings; some lists link him to Apamea. The circumstances of his death are unknown, but the Orthodox office dedicated to him and to Junia honors them as martyrs. In the 5th century, under Arcadius and Honorius, relics identified as theirs were discovered near Constantinople, and a church was built on the spot.

Andronicus and Junia are celebrated on May 17, in the Catholic Church as in the Orthodox Churches. They are often shown together on icons, Andronicus as a bishop.

What can we learn from Saint Andronicus?

Andronicus reminds us that the Gospel spread thanks to a crowd of witnesses of whom we know almost nothing. He believed very early, he suffered prison for Christ, and he was esteemed by all the apostles. With Junia, he also shows the place of couples and families in the mission of the Church. You can pray to him for missionaries, for Christians imprisoned because of their faith, and for couples who serve the Gospel together.

To pray with him, see the prayer to Saint Andronicus and the novena to Saint Andronicus.

Where to pray to Saint Andronicus

- **In the Bible**: by reading chapter 16 of the Letter to the Romans, where Paul greets him.
- **In any church**, on May 17, his feast day with Saint Junia.
- **In churches of the Byzantine rite**, which keep his memory among the seventy disciples.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Andronicus for Missionaries and Imprisoned Christians

Saint Andronicus, a disciple of Christ even before Saint Paul, shared the imprisonment of the apostle, who greets him with Junia in the Letter to the Romans. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him missionaries, Christians imprisoned for their faith and couples who serve the Gospel together.

Prayer to Saint Andronicus

Saint Andronicus,
you believed in Christ from the first days
and the apostles held you in high esteem:
keep me in the freshness of faith
and in the joy of the Gospel.

You shared the chains of Saint Paul
for the proclamation of the Kingdom:
support imprisoned Christians,
and let me never be ashamed of Christ.

With Saint Junia, you served the mission of the Church:
bless couples and families
who bear witness to their faith together,
and raise up new missionaries.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Andronicus

- On his feast day with Saint Junia, May 17.
- For missionaries and those who proclaim the Gospel far away.
- For Christians in prison because of their faith.
- For couples committed together to the service of the Church.
- When reading Saint Paul's greetings in the Letter to the Romans.

A short invocation

> *Saint Andronicus and Saint Junia, companions of Saint Paul,*
> *pray for us and for the mission of the Church. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Andronicus from May 9 to 17, and read the life of Saint Andronicus.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Andronicus

This novena offers nine days of prayer with Saint Andronicus, a disciple of the earliest times and fellow prisoner of Saint Paul. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. To finish it on his feast day, May 17, begin on May 9. 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 Andronicus, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely. The meditations draw on the witness of Saint Paul and, for some days, on the tradition of the Eastern Churches.

Day 1: A name in a letter

We know Andronicus through a single verse of Saint Paul. Yet God knows each of his disciples, even those whose lives history has forgotten.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for all the unknown Christians who handed on the faith down to me.

Act of the day: Read chapter 16 of the Letter to the Romans slowly.

Day 2: A disciple before Paul

Andronicus belonged to Christ even before Paul's conversion. He was part of the very first Church.

Prayer: Lord, renew in me the fervor of the first Christians.

Act of the day: Reread a passage of the Acts of the Apostles about the first community in Jerusalem.

Day 3: A relative of the apostle

Paul calls Andronicus his "relative". Faith creates bonds between believers as strong as those of family.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to see other Christians as my brothers and sisters.

Act of the day: Greet warmly, at Mass, someone you do not know.

Day 4: Fellow prisoner

Andronicus shared Paul's imprisonment for the Gospel. He paid for the proclamation of Christ with his freedom.

Prayer: Lord, support Christians imprisoned because of their faith. Give them your peace.

Act of the day: Pray for a Christian detained somewhere in the world, or support a charity that defends them.

Day 5: Esteemed by the apostles

Paul says that Andronicus and Junia are outstanding among the apostles. Their service of the Gospel was recognized by all.

Prayer: Lord, make me a faithful servant of your Gospel, without seeking honors.

Act of the day: Do a discreet service for your parish.

Day 6: A couple for the mission

Andronicus is always named with Junia, whom tradition often sees as his wife. Together they served the Gospel.

Prayer: Lord, bless Christian couples. Make their love a witness to your love.

Act of the day: Pray for a couple you know, or pray with your spouse.

Day 7: Sent on mission

Eastern tradition counts him among the seventy disciples sent by Christ to proclaim the Kingdom.

Prayer: Lord, send laborers into your harvest, and make me ready to proclaim your Word.

Act of the day: Pray for missionaries, or support a missionary work.

Day 8: A shepherd far away

According to tradition, Andronicus became a bishop in Pannonia, far from Jerusalem. The Gospel crosses borders.

Prayer: Lord, bless the Churches of Central Europe and all who proclaim your name there.

Act of the day: Pray for the Church in a country you know little about.

Day 9: A witness to the end

Orthodox tradition honors Andronicus and Junia as martyrs. Their whole life was a witness given to Christ.

Prayer: Lord, through the intercession of Saint Andronicus and Saint Junia, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: If possible, attend Mass, and thank God for those who handed on the faith to you.

Living the novena with Saint Andronicus

Andronicus is a discreet witness of the first times of the Church. During these nine days, you can entrust to him missionaries, imprisoned Christians, and couples who serve the Gospel together. Rereading the letters of Saint Paul is a fine way to join him.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Andronicus,*
> *disciple of the first days and companion of Saint Paul,*
> *you believed, served and suffered for Christ.*
> *Present to God the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *With Saint Junia, keep me faithful*
> *and make me a joyful witness of the Gospel.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

Credits and sources

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