

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Aredius (Yrieix)

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: August 25

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IN BRIEF

Saint Aredius (Yrieix)

Gallo-Roman nobleman who became a cleric in Trier, founder and abbot of the monastery of Attane in the Limousin in the 6th century.

Feast day	August 25
Born	between 510 and 516, Limoges, France
Died	August 591, Attane (Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche, Haute-Vienne, France)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century
Patron saint of	Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Aredius for the Sick and for Our Land

Novena to Saint Aredius

Collegiate Church of Le Moustier, Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Aredius (Yrieix)

Saint Aredius, known in France as Saint Yrieix, was a sixth-century Gallo-Roman nobleman, born in Limoges around 510-516. After living at the court of the Frankish king Theudebert I, he became a cleric in the household of Saint Nicetius, bishop of Trier, and then founded the monastery of Attane in the Limousin region, which grew into the town of Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche. He died in August 591. His contemporary Gregory of Tours, who knew him personally, wrote about his life. His feast day is August 25.

Who was Saint Aredius?

Aredius, called Yrieix in the Limousin and Héray in Poitou, came from a wealthy family of Limoges. His father was named Jocundus and his mother Pelagia. He received a Christian upbringing and, as a young man, entered the service of the Frankish kings. But his life took a new direction when he met the bishop of Trier. Ordained a priest and made an abbot, he gave his wealth and his life to prayer, to the poor and to spreading the Gospel in the countryside of the Limousin. We know him above all through Saint Gregory of Tours, who was his friend and speaks of him in his books, and through his will, which has come down to us.



The reliquary bust of Saint Yrieix, c. 1220-1240.

Key dates

- **Between 510 and 516**: Born in Limoges, into a well-to-do Gallo-Roman family.
- **c. 534-548**: Lives at the court of Theudebert I, king of Austrasia, who holds him in high esteem.
- **Afterward**: Saint Nicetius, bishop of Trier, welcomes him among his clergy.
- **After the death of his father and brother**: Returns to Limoges to be with his mother, Pelagia.
- **Mid-sixth century**: Founds the monastery of Attane on his own land and becomes its first abbot.
- **572**: Confirms his will, which benefits in particular the basilicas of Saint Martin in Tours and Saint Hilary in Poitiers.

- **573**: Death of his mother, Pelagia.
- **August 591**: Dies at Attane, at nearly 80 years of age.
- **May 17, 1181**: His body is solemnly raised from its tomb by Sébrand Chabot, bishop of Limoges.

From the royal court to the school of Trier

As a young man, Aredius was sent to the court of Austrasia. King Theudebert I, who reigned from 534 to 548, gave him his esteem and affection. A fine career lay ahead of him. But Saint Nicetius, bishop of Trier, noticed the young man and invited him to leave court life and join his clergy.

Gregory of Tours reports a sign from that time. One day, while the clerics were singing the psalms, a white dove came down, fluttered around Aredius and landed on his head. Embarrassed, he tried to shoo it away, but it came back to rest on him and followed him all the way to the bishop's house. For the people of his time, this was a sign that the Holy Spirit rested upon him.

The founder of Attane

When his father and brother died, Aredius returned to Limoges to support his mother. He did not give up the consecrated life, however. On his estate of Attanum, he founded a monastery and became its first abbot. The first monks were members of his own family. The rule he gave them drew on the great masters of monastic life: Saint John Cassian, Saint Basil and the Desert Fathers. His mother, Pelagia, provided for the material needs of the community. Over the centuries, the town of Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche grew up around the abbey.

Pilgrim, builder and healer

Aredius loved the saints. He often went to pray at the tomb of Saint Martin in Tours, and he traveled to Brioude to bring back relics of Saint Julian, martyr. He built churches and oratories in honor of the saints whose relics he brought

home. Gregory of Tours says he could not count all the sick people healed by his Sign of the Cross. He also tells how Aredius made a spring gush from dry ground, and how his prayer stopped a rain that was holding up the building of an oratory.

In his will, he left his property to the basilicas of Saint Martin in Tours and Saint Hilary in Poitiers. He died in August 591, at nearly 80 years of age. Saint Ferreolus, bishop of Limoges, presided at his funeral.

Devotion and art

Saint Aredius appears in the Roman Martyrology on August 25. His body was raised from the ground in 1181 by Bishop Sébrand Chabot. His skull was placed in a gilded silver reliquary bust, made in Limoges around 1220-1240. This bust was sold in the early 20th century and is now kept at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and a copy is in Saint-Yrieix. Many places bear his name, such as Saint-Yrieix-la-Montagne, La Mothe-Saint-Héray in Poitou and Saint-Izaire in Rouergue. He is shown as an abbot, sometimes with a dove.

What can we learn from Saint Aredius?

Saint Aredius put his fortune, his education and his family at the service of God. He was able to leave the court without turning his back on his loved ones, and to make his land a place of prayer and work. A great pilgrim, he linked his native Limousin to the shrines of Tours, Poitiers and Brioude. We can pray to him for the sick, for families who grow in faith together, and for the Church in rural areas.

To pray with him, you can use the prayer to Saint Aredius or the novena to Saint Aredius.

Where to pray to Saint Aredius

- **Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche** (Haute-Vienne, France): the collegiate church of Le Moustier, on the site of his monastery.
- **Limoges** (France): his hometown, seat of the diocese.
- **La Mothe-Saint-Héray** (Deux-Sèvres) and **Saint-Yrieix-la-Montagne** (Creuse): towns that bear his name.
- **New York**: the Metropolitan Museum, which keeps his medieval reliquary bust.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Aredius for the Sick and for Our Land

Saint Aredius, also known as Saint Yrieix, left the court of a Frankish king to give himself to God, and then founded the monastery of Attane in the Limousin in the sixth century. His friend Gregory of Tours tells us that he healed many sick people with the Sign of the Cross. This prayer is an original composition inspired by his life, not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him the sick, families and the land where we live.

Prayer to Saint Aredius

Saint Aredius,
you left the court of the king
to serve the King of heaven.
On your land at Attane,
you brought to life a place of prayer and work,
with your mother and your family.

Pilgrim to Saint Martin and Saint Julian,
you loved the saints and built their churches.
With the Sign of the Cross,
you relieved the sick who came to you.

Pray for those who suffer in their bodies
and for those who care for them.
Pray for our families,
that they may learn to pray together.
Pray for our countryside and our small parishes,
that the Gospel may always be proclaimed there.

Teach us to place our goods and our talents
at the service of God and of the poor.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Aredius

- On his feast day, August 25.
- For someone who is sick, tracing the Sign of the Cross over them.
- For a family trying to live its faith together.
- Before a pilgrimage, or while visiting a shrine.
- For rural parishes, in the Limousin and elsewhere.

A simple invocation

> *Saint Aredius, friend of the saints and of the sick,*
> *keep us in the peace of Christ*
> *and bless the land where we live. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Aredius from August 17 to 25, and read the life of Saint Aredius.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Aredius

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Aredius, also known as Saint Yrieix, founder of the monastery of Attane in the Limousin in the sixth century. It is not an official liturgical text. To end it on his feast day, August 25, begin on August 17. It is especially suited to entrusting a sick person or a family to God, and you can 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 Aredius, pray for us." The small act proposed each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A Christian family

Aredius was born in Limoges, the son of Jocundus and Pelagia. He received a Christian upbringing from his parents. Later, his mother would support all his work. Faith is first handed on in the family.

Prayer: Lord, bless my family and all families. Make our homes places where we learn to love you.

Today: Pray for a moment together as a family, or call a relative to see how they are doing.

Day 2: At the king's court

As a young man, Aredius lived at the court of Theudebert I, who held him in high esteem. He knew the world of power and success. God also meets us in our places of work and responsibility.

Prayer: Lord, keep me from seeking success and the approval of the powerful above all. May my life be turned first toward you.

Today: Pray for those who hold political or economic power.

Day 3: The call of Saint Nicetius

The bishop of Trier, Saint Nicetius, noticed Aredius and invited him to follow him. The young man needed courage to leave the court. Often God calls us through the voice of another person.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for those who have called me to grow. Help me listen to the people you place on my path.

Today: Thank someone who has mattered on your journey of faith.

Day 4: The dove

Gregory of Tours tells how a white dove landed on Aredius's head while the psalms were being sung. He was embarrassed by it. God's gifts are not given to make us proud, but to help us serve.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, come and dwell in my heart. Give me the humility to receive your gifts without boasting of them.

Today: Pray the "Come, Holy Spirit" slowly.

Day 5: Comforting his mother

When his father and brother died, Aredius returned to Limoges to comfort his mother. The consecrated life did not take him away from his family: it made him more attentive to their sorrows.

Prayer: Lord, comfort those in my family who are grieving or sad. Help me to be there for them.

Today: Visit an elderly or lonely relative.

Day 6: Founding Attane

On his own land, Aredius founded a monastery. His first monks were members of his family, and he gave them a rule inspired by the great Fathers of monastic life. He turned his inheritance into a place of prayer.

Prayer: Lord, show me how to put what I own at your service and at the service of others.

Today: Make a donation to a religious community or to a ministry of your parish.

Day 7: The pilgrim

Aredius often went to pray at the tomb of Saint Martin in Tours, and he brought back relics of Saint Julian from Brioude. Pilgrimage sets the body walking toward God and joins us to the communion of saints.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the saints who have gone before us. Teach me to walk toward you with them.

Today: Visit a nearby church and pray there before the statue of a saint.

Day 8: The Sign of the Cross

Gregory of Tours says that Aredius healed a great many sick people with the Sign of the Cross. This simple gesture, which we often make without thinking, expresses our whole faith in Christ who died and rose again.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, by your cross, heal the sick whom I entrust to you. Give them peace and strength.

Today: Make the Sign of the Cross slowly, thinking about each word, and pray for someone who is sick.

Day 9: A life given back to God

Aredius died in 591, at nearly 80 years of age, after leaving his property to the basilicas of Saint Martin and Saint Hilary. He had given everything, to the very end.

Prayer: Lord, grant that I may place my life in your hands with trust. Through the intercession of Saint Aredius, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Today: Pray for the dying, and for the departed members of your family.

Living the novena with Saint Aredius

Saint Aredius did not go looking for great adventures far away. He made his native land, his family and his property a place where God was served. During these nine days, look at your own life the same way: your home, your work, your region. Where is God waiting for you? If you are praying for someone who is sick, feel free to trace the Sign of the Cross over them, as Saint Aredius did, with faith and simplicity.

Closing prayer

Saint Aredius,
abbot of Attane and friend of the saints,
you left the court to serve God
and relieved the sick with the Sign of the Cross.
Present to God the intention I have carried during these nine days.
Bless our families and our homes,
keep the sick in peace,
and teach us to give everything to the Lord.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

PILGRIMAGE

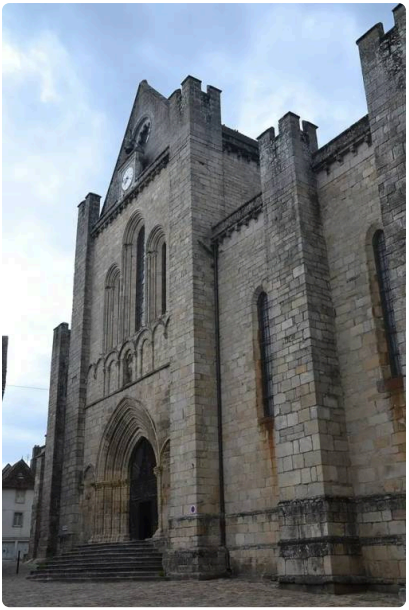
Collegiate Church of Le Moustier, Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche

The collegiate church of Le Moustier stands in the heart of Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche, in the Haute-Vienne department of France, about 25 miles south of Limoges. It rises on the site of the monastery of Attane, founded in the sixth century by Saint Yrieix, or Aredius, on his own land. It is the main place where he is remembered and venerated.

From the monastery of Attane to the collegiate church

In the middle of the sixth century, Aredius turned his estate of Attanum into a monastery and became its first abbot. He died there in 591 and was buried there. Little by little, a town grew up around the abbey and took the name of its founder. The monastery later became a collegiate church served by canons, and the word "Moustier," which comes from the Latin *monasterium*, keeps the memory of its origin.

In 1181, Sébrand Chabot, bishop of Limoges, solemnly raised the body of Saint Yrieix. The present church, a vast granite building blending Romanesque and Gothic art, dates mostly from the 12th and 13th centuries. It was for this church that the saint's gilded silver reliquary bust was made around 1220-1240. The bust was sold in the early 20th century and is now kept at the Metropolitan Museum in New York. A copy is in Saint-Yrieix.



The collegiate church of Le Moustier, in Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche.

Visiting the collegiate church of Le Moustier

The collegiate church is in the old center of Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche. Listed as a historic monument, it is striking for its size and the simplicity of its Limousin granite. Visitors can discover the memory of Saint Yrieix and of the former monastery, as well as the church's liturgical furnishings.

Praying on site

Before your visit, you can read the life of Saint Yrieix. In the church, entrust to the saint the sick, your families and rural parishes, then recite the prayer to Saint Yrieix. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Other places of Saint Yrieix

- **Limoges**: his hometown.

- **Tours** and **Brioude**: the shrines of Saint Martin and Saint Julian, where he loved to go on pilgrimage.
- **La Mothe-Saint-Héray** and **Saint-Yrieix-la-Montagne**: towns that bear his name.
- **New York**: the Metropolitan Museum, where his medieval reliquary bust is displayed.

Practical information

Saint-Yrieix-la-Perche is easy to reach by car from Limoges. The collegiate church is a working church: modest dress and silence are requested, especially during services. Opening hours, Mass times and any guided tours may vary: check with the parish or the Pays de Saint-Yrieix tourist office before you come.

Credits and sources

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