BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Astrik of Esztergom

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: November 12

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IN BRIEF

Saint Astrik of Esztergom

Benedictine monk, companion of Saint Adalbert of Prague, first archbishop of Hungary in the time of King Saint Stephen.

Feast day	November 12
Born	mid-10th century
Died	November 12, 1036 or 1039, Hungary
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	11th century

In this booklet

Life

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Novena to Saint Astrik

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Astrik of Esztergom

Saint Astrik (Asztrik in Hungarian, also called Astericus or Anastasius in the sources) was a Benedictine monk of the late 10th and early 11th centuries. A companion of Saint Adalbert of Prague and first abbot of Břevnov in Bohemia, he moved to Hungary, where he was one of the chief builders of the Church in the time of King Saint Stephen, whose crown he is said to have brought back from the pope. He became the first archbishop of Hungary and died around 1036. His feast day is November 12.

Who was Saint Astrik?

Astrik was one of the missionaries who, around the year 1000, brought Central Europe into Christendom. His life is known only in fragments, and the sources are often unclear, even contradictory: there is uncertainty about his origin, his various names, the sees he held and even the year of his death. What emerges, however, is the figure of a Benedictine monk formed in the circle of Saint Adalbert, who became one of the close advisers of the first Christian king of Hungary. Hungarian tradition honors him as one of the apostles of the country.

Key dates in the life of Astrik

- **Mid-10th century**: Born, on an unknown date and in an unknown place; his origin remains uncertain.
- **980s-990s**: A Benedictine monk, he accompanies Saint Adalbert of Prague in the evangelization of Bohemia and follows him into exile in Rome.
- **993**: He becomes the first abbot of the monastery of Břevnov, founded near Prague.

- **c. 997**: Forced to leave Bohemia, he goes to Hungary, where he becomes chaplain to Sarolt, wife of Prince Géza.
- **Late 10th century**: He is the first superior of the newly founded Benedictine abbey of Pannonhalma.
- **1000 or 1001**: As envoy of Prince Stephen to Pope Sylvester II, he obtains recognition of his royal title; Stephen is crowned with the crown sent by the pope.
- **Early 11th century**: He becomes the first archbishop of Hungary; the sources link him with Kalocsa and with Esztergom.
- **November 12, c. 1036**: Dies, in 1036 or 1039 according to the sources.

The companion of Saint Adalbert

Astrik first appears alongside Saint Adalbert, bishop of Prague, who sought to root the Christian faith in Bohemia. He assisted him in his mission and accompanied him when the bishop, facing strong opposition, withdrew to Rome. Some historians identify him with the priest Radla, who had been Adalbert's teacher in his youth; this hypothesis is debated. In 993, when Adalbert founded the Benedictine monastery of Břevnov near Prague, Astrik became its first abbot.

Missionary in Hungary

Political unrest soon forced Astrik to leave Bohemia. He went to Hungary, where Grand Prince Géza, a convert to Christianity, was opening the country to missionaries. Astrik became chaplain to his wife, Princess Sarolt, and continued the evangelization of the Magyars. He was then the first superior of the abbey of Pannonhalma, founded on a hill in the west of the country, which is still today the Benedictine heart of Hungary.

The envoy of Saint Stephen

In the service of Géza's son, the future Saint Stephen, Astrik received a decisive mission. He went to Rome to Pope Sylvester II to ask for recognition of the new Christian kingdom. The pope granted Stephen the title of king and sent him a crown, which tradition says Astrik brought back. Stephen was crowned around the year 1000. This step placed Hungary in communion with the Roman Church and opened the way to its ecclesiastical organization, with the creation of dioceses.

Astrik then became the first archbishop of the kingdom. The sources disagree about his see: he is linked with Kalocsa, in the south of the country, but also with Esztergom, of which he is said to have been archbishop from 1007. He is said to have died on November 12, 1036, or in 1039.

Devotion and art

Hungary honors Astrik as one of its apostles, alongside King Saint Stephen and Saint Gerard of Csanád. He is celebrated on November 12. He is shown as a bishop, often holding the Holy Crown of Hungary in memory of his embassy to Rome, as in the statue erected at Kalocsa in the year 2000.

What can we learn from Saint Astrik?

Astrik was a man of journeys and foundations: from Bohemia to Hungary, from Rome to the lands of the Magyars, he served the Gospel wherever circumstances led him. As a monk, he founded communities of prayer; as a bishop and diplomat, he helped a people enter the great family of the Church. You can pray to him for Hungary and Central Europe, for missionaries, for diplomats and for those who serve the Church in tasks of organization.

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

Where to pray to Saint Astrik

- **Pannonhalma** (Hungary): the Benedictine archabbey of which he was the first superior.
- **Kalocsa** (Hungary): the archiepiscopal town where a statue is dedicated to him.
- **Břevnov** (Prague, Czech Republic): the monastery of which he was the first abbot.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Astrik for Hungary and for Missionaries

Saint Astrik, a Benedictine monk and companion of Saint Adalbert of Prague, was the first abbot of Břevnov and then the first archbishop of Hungary, in the service of King Saint Stephen. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him Hungary, missionaries and those who serve the Church in diplomacy and organization.

Prayer to Saint Astrik

Saint Astrik,
monk of Saint Benedict and companion of Saint Adalbert,
you left your land
to carry the Gospel to new peoples.
Grant me to serve Christ
wherever his providence leads me.

Envoy of King Stephen to the successor of Peter,
you helped a people
to enter into the communion of the Church.
Bless those who work for peace between nations,
diplomats and servants of the Church.

First shepherd of Hungary,
watch over this country and over Central Europe,
keep them faithful to their Christian roots,
and lead us all to Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Astrik

- On his feast day, November 12.
- For Hungary, Bohemia and the peoples of Central Europe.
- For missionaries going out to peoples who do not know Christ.
- For diplomats, ambassadors and those who negotiate peace.
- For Benedictine monks, especially those of Pannonhalma and Břevnov.

A short invocation

> *Saint Astrik, apostle of the Hungarians,*
> *pray for us and for the unity of the Church. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Astrik from November 4 to November 12, and read the life of Saint Astrik.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Astrik

This novena spends nine days with Saint Astrik, Benedictine monk, companion of Saint Adalbert and first archbishop of Hungary. 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 12, begin on November 4. 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 Astrik, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely. The sources on his life are fragmentary: the meditations keep to what has been handed down.

Day 1: A monk of Saint Benedict

Astrik chose Benedictine life: prayer, work and community life under a rule. From it he would draw the strength for his mission.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to unite prayer and work in my life.

Act of the day: Pray one hour of the Liturgy of the Hours, for example Lauds or Vespers.

Day 2: Beside Adalbert

Astrik accompanied Saint Adalbert of Prague in his mission in Bohemia and followed him in the trial of exile. He was a faithful companion.

Prayer: Lord, make me a faithful friend in the trials of those I love.

Act of the day: Support someone going through a trial with a message or a visit.

Day 3: Founding Břevnov

In 993, Astrik became the first abbot of Břevnov, near Prague. He laid the foundations of a community of prayer.

Prayer: Lord, bless monasteries and all who pray there for the world.

Act of the day: Pray for a religious community you know.

Day 4: Leaving again

Driven out by unrest, Astrik left Bohemia for Hungary. This forced departure became the occasion for a new mission.

Prayer: Lord, when I must leave what is familiar to me, help me to see the path you are opening.

Act of the day: Accept with trust a change you did not choose.

Day 5: Serving a princely family

As chaplain to Princess Sarolt, Astrik accompanied the faith of a family that would give Hungary its first Christian king.

Prayer: Lord, bless families, and make them places where saints grow.

Act of the day: Pray as a family, or pray for your family.

Day 6: Pannonhalma

Astrik was the first superior of the abbey of Pannonhalma, which a thousand years later is still a center of prayer and study.

Prayer: Lord, make what we begin for you bear fruit, far beyond our own lives.

Act of the day: Begin a small project in the service of others.

Day 7: The embassy to Rome

Sent by Stephen to Pope Sylvester II, Astrik obtained recognition of the Christian kingdom of Hungary. The crown sent by the pope became the sign of this bond.

Prayer: Lord, keep your Church united around the successor of Peter.

Act of the day: Pray for the pope and his intentions.

Day 8: Organizing the Church

As first archbishop of Hungary, Astrik took part in creating the dioceses. Serving the Church also means patient work of organization.

Prayer: Lord, bless those who serve the Church in hidden and necessary tasks.

Act of the day: Offer your help with a practical service in your parish.

Day 9: The missionary's rest

Astrik died around 1036, after a life given to the Gospel from Bohemia to Hungary. His people honor him as an apostle.

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

Act of the day: Attend Mass, or pray for missionaries.

Closing prayer

Saint Astrik,
monk, missionary and shepherd,
you served the Gospel in Bohemia and Hungary
and brought a people closer to the Church of Rome.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Watch over Hungary and over Europe,
and keep us faithful to our baptism.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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