BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Baldred

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: March 6

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IN BRIEF

Saint Baldred

Anglo-Saxon monk of Lindisfarne, missionary of Lothian and hermit of the Bass Rock in the 8th century.

Feast day	March 6
Born	8th century
Died	756 (or March 6, 757), Bass Rock (East Lothian, Scotland)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	8th century

In this booklet

Life

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Novena to Saint Baldred

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Baldred

Saint Baldred (in Latin Baltherus, sometimes called Balther) was an 8th-century Anglo-Saxon monk who came from the abbey of Lindisfarne to proclaim the Gospel in Lothian, in the southeast of present-day Scotland. He lived as a hermit on the Bass Rock, at the mouth of the Firth of Forth, where he died around 756. His feast day is March 6.

Who was Saint Baldred?

Baldred is one of those Northumbrian monks who, following Saint Aidan and Saint Cuthbert, carried the Christian faith along the shores of the North Sea. His life is very poorly known. The Durham chroniclers, Symeon and Turgot, preserved the date of his death, and local tradition kept the memory of his places of prayer and his miracles. For the rest, the sources are thin, and one must avoid embroidering. He has sometimes been confused with another Baldred, linked by legend to Saint Kentigern of Glasgow, which adds to the uncertainty.

Key dates in the life of Baldred

- **8th century**: Monk of the abbey of Lindisfarne, in Northumbria.
- **Next**: He is sent to evangelize the still pagan people of Lothian, on the shores of the Firth of Forth.
- **Later**: He withdraws as a hermit to the rocky island of the Bass Rock.
- **756**: He dies on the Bass Rock, according to Symeon of Durham; Turgot of Durham also proposes March 6, 757.
- **1546**: A chapel is consecrated to him on the Bass Rock.
- **Today**: A cave on the coast, at Seacliff, still bears his name.

Monk of Lindisfarne and missionary

Lindisfarne, the "Holy Island" of the Northumbrian coast, was in the 8th century one of the great missionary centers of northern England. From there Baldred was sent to Lothian, a region then attached to the kingdom of Northumbria, where part of the population was still pagan. We know almost nothing of how he carried out this mission: tradition only remembers that he preached in the area of the Firth of Forth and left a lasting memory there.

The hermit of the Bass Rock

Like Saint Cuthbert on the island of Farne, Baldred chose to end his life in the solitude of a rock beaten by the sea. The Bass Rock, a high isolated cliff off the coast, is today one of the great seabird colonies of Europe. There he lived in prayer and there he died. The Durham chroniclers place his death in 756; Turgot dates it to the seventieth year of the episcopate of Cynulf, which amounts to the same year, but he also suggests March 6, 757. The place of his burial remains unknown. Some think he may have been buried on the coast, near Tantallon Castle, in the area of North Berwick.

Devotion and memory

The memory of Baldred was kept alive in East Lothian, like that of several other local saints. Many miracles were attributed to him. A late tradition even tells that three neighboring parishes disputed his body, and that it was miraculously multiplied so that each could keep one: this legendary story mainly expresses the people's attachment to their saint. In 1546, a chapel was consecrated to him on the Bass Rock, of which remains survive. On the coast, at Seacliff, a cave bears the name of Saint Baldred's Cave. His feast day is March 6.

What can we learn from Saint Baldred?

Saint Baldred united two vocations: proclaiming the Gospel and the solitude of prayer. He went to those who did not know Christ, then withdrew to face the sea and pray for them. You can pray to him for missionaries, for sailors and coastal people, and for all who seek God in silence.

Where to pray to Saint Baldred

- **The Bass Rock** (East Lothian, Scotland): the island where he lived and died, with the remains of the chapel of 1546.
- **Seacliff** (East Lothian): the cave that bears his name.
- **Lindisfarne** (Northumberland, England): the monastic island he set out from.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Baldred for Missionaries and Seafarers

Saint Baldred, a monk of Lindisfarne in the 8th century, proclaimed the Gospel in Lothian before ending his life as a hermit on the Bass Rock, facing the sea. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him missionaries, seafarers and those who seek God in silence.

Prayer to Saint Baldred

Saint Baldred,
monk of the Holy Island of Lindisfarne,
you left your monastery
to bring Christ to those who did not know him.
Give me the courage to proclaim the Gospel
by my words and by my life.

On your rock beaten by the waves,
you prayed in solitude and in the wind.
Teach me to find God in silence,
and to return to prayer again and again.

Watch over sailors and fishermen,
over those who live by the sea,
and over missionaries far from home.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Baldred

- On his feast day, March 6.
- For missionaries and those who proclaim the Gospel.
- For sailors, fishermen and their families.
- When you are looking for a time of silence and retreat.
- For the Church in Scotland and northern England.

A short invocation

> *Saint Baldred, hermit of the Bass Rock,*
> *pray for those at sea. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Baldred from February 26 to March 6, and read the life of Saint Baldred.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Baldred

This novena is inspired by the life of Saint Baldred, monk of Lindisfarne, missionary of Lothian and hermit of the Bass Rock in the 8th century. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, March 6, begin on February 26 (February 27 in leap years). 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 Baldred, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely. We know little of his life: these meditations start from what tradition has kept.

Day 1: The Holy Island

Baldred was a monk at Lindisfarne, the island from which Saint Aidan and Saint Cuthbert had shone. He received the faith from a community of prayer.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the communities that helped me grow in faith.

Act of the day: Pray for a religious community or for your parish.

Day 2: Sent

Baldred was sent to Lothian. He left the security of his monastery to go to others.

Prayer: Lord, help me dare to step out of my habits and go to those who are waiting for you.

Act of the day: Reach out to someone you do not know yet.

Day 3: Proclaiming Christ

In Lothian, many did not yet know Christ. Baldred proclaimed the Gospel to them.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, give me the words and the gestures that make Jesus known.

Act of the day: Pray for someone close to you who does not believe.

Day 4: The sower's patience

Evangelizing a region takes years. Baldred sowed without always seeing the harvest.

Prayer: Lord, teach me patience, and trust in your hidden work.

Act of the day: Persevere in an effort you were tempted to give up.

Day 5: Choosing solitude

Baldred withdrew to the Bass Rock. He chose solitude in order to stand before God.

Prayer: Lord, help me find a time of silence with you every day.

Act of the day: Turn off your screens for an hour and pray.

Day 6: Facing the sea

On his rock, Baldred lived between the sky and the waves. The vast sea spoke to him of the greatness of God.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to the beauty of your creation, and teach me to respect it.

Act of the day: Take a moment to contemplate nature and give thanks.

Day 7: Praying for others

The hermit does not flee the world: he carries it in his prayer. Baldred went on serving Lothian through his intercession.

Prayer: Lord, I entrust to you those who count on my prayer, and those for whom no one prays.

Act of the day: Make a list of people to entrust to God and pray for them.

Day 8: The people of the coast

The people of East Lothian kept his memory for centuries. On this coast, life depended on the sea.

Prayer: Lord, protect sailors, fishermen and their families. Bring them home safe and sound.

Act of the day: Pray for seafarers and for those who have died at sea.

Day 9: Dying in peace

Baldred died on the Bass Rock, around 756, after a life given to God. His name remains attached to the rocks and caves of the coast.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to live and die in your peace. Through the intercession of Saint Baldred, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass and pray for your departed.

Closing prayer

Saint Baldred,
monk, missionary and hermit,
you brought Christ to Lothian and prayed facing the sea.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Keep me faithful to prayer
and watch over those at sea.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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