

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Baudilus of Nimes

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: May 20

IN BRIEF

Saint Baudilus of Nimes

Third-century martyr of Nimes, patron saint of the city.

Feast day	May 20
Born	Orleans, according to tradition
Died	3rd century, Nimes, France
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	3rd century
Patron saint of	Nimes

In this booklet

Life

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Novena to Saint Baudilus of Nimes

Church of Saint-Baudile in Nimes

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Baudilus of Nimes

Saint Baudilus, also known as Baudile, Bauzile or Bauzely, and in Catalonia as Baldiri, was a martyr of Nimes who died in the third century according to tradition. He came to preach the Gospel in the region with his wife, and was put to death for interrupting a pagan sacrifice. His tomb became a great place of pilgrimage, and his cult spread throughout the south of France and into Spain. He is the patron saint of Nimes, and his feast day is May 20.

Who was Saint Baudilus?

The sources on Baudilus are late and legendary: we do not know the exact date of his death, and the story of his martyrdom was embellished with marvels over the centuries. But his cult is ancient and well attested: a church stood over his tomb as early as late antiquity. The Catholic Church honors him as a martyr, and Nimes recognizes him as its patron.

Key dates

- **3rd century**: A native of Orleans according to legend, he comes with his wife to evangelize the region of Nimes.
- **3rd century**: He interrupts a pagan sacrifice; the crowd kills him and beheads him with an ax.
- **After his death**: His wife buries his body at a place called the Valsainte, which becomes a place of pilgrimage.
- **4th century**: A church is built over his tomb, then a monastery that will last until the 16th century.
- **1867-1877**: The great church of Saint-Baudile is built in Nimes.

A missionary couple

According to tradition, Baudilus did not come alone. With his wife, he left the region of Orleans to proclaim Christ in the country around Nimes, at that time a wealthy Roman city. This detail is rare and touching: here the mission is the work of a married couple, united in faith and in the service of the Gospel. The name of his wife has not come down to us.

The martyrdom and the three fountains

The legend tells that Baudilus came upon a pagan festival near Nimes and interrupted the sacrifice to proclaim the one God. Enraged, the worshipers threw themselves on him and beheaded him with an ax. His head is said to have bounced three times on the ground, and at each spot a spring gushed up. Later an oratory was built over these springs, called the Three Fountains.

This wondrous story, which is also told of other martyrs, expresses a conviction of faith: the blood of the martyrs becomes a source of life for the Church. His wife gathered up his body and buried it at a place called the Valsainte.

The tomb and the monastery

The tomb of Baudilus soon drew pilgrims. A church was built there as early as the 4th century, and then a monastery grew up around the shrine. It lasted until the 16th century. The saint's name is still attached to the Saint-Baudile neighborhood and cemetery in Nimes.

Devotion to Saint Baudilus

The cult of Baudilus spread far beyond Nimes. More than four hundred churches are dedicated to him, and many towns bear his name, such as Saint-Bauzille-de-Putois in the Herault or Sant Boi de Llobregat, near Barcelona.

Relics are said to have been brought to Paris, to Orleans and to Burgundy. He is honored by the Catholic Church on May 20.

Why pray to Saint Baudilus?

Baudilus dared to speak at a moment when it would have been safer to keep quiet. He reminds us that the Christian faith is not only a private matter, but Good News to be proclaimed, even against the current. Together with his wife, he also bears witness to the beauty of a couple united in mission. Christians can pray to him:

- for the courage to bear witness to their faith;
- for couples involved in the life of the Church;
- for the city of Nimes.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Baudilus in art

He is shown as a martyr, holding the sword or the ax of his execution and the palm, as on the facade of the church of Saint-Baudile in Nimes.

Where to pray to Saint Baudilus

- **Nimes** (Gard, France): the church of Saint-Baudile, the largest church in the city, dedicated to him.
- **Nimes**: the Saint-Baudile neighborhood and cemetery, which keep the memory of his tomb and of the former monastery.
- **Sant Boi de Llobregat** (Catalonia, Spain): the town that bears his Catalan name.

To pray with him at home, you can use the prayer to Saint Baudilus or the novena to Saint Baudilus.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Baudilus for the Courage to Bear Witness

According to tradition, Saint Baudilus came from Orleans with his wife to proclaim the Gospel in the region of Nimes. For interrupting a pagan sacrifice, he was put to death in the 3rd century, and his tomb became a great place of pilgrimage. This prayer is an original composition inspired by his life, not an official liturgical text. It asks him for the courage to bear witness, and entrusts to him married couples and the city of Nimes.

Prayer to Saint Baudilus

Saint Baudilus,
witness of Christ in the land of Nimes,
you left your homeland with your wife
to bring the Gospel to those who did not know it.

You dared to speak of the living God
among those who worshiped idols,
and you gave your life for that word.
From your blood, tradition says, springs gushed forth:
may your faith be a living spring for us.

Give us the courage to speak of our faith
gently and without shame.
Bless the couples who serve the Gospel together,
and watch over your city of Nimes and all who live there.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Baudilus

- On his feast day, May 20.
- When it takes courage to speak about your faith at work, in your family or among friends.
- For a couple involved in mission or in parish life.
- For the city and the diocese of Nimes.
- When visiting the church of Saint-Baudile in Nimes.

A short prayer to bear witness

Saint Baudilus was not afraid to proclaim Christ. Before an important conversation, you can say to him:

> *Saint Baudilus, put the right words on my lips.*
> *May I bear witness to Christ with courage and with love. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Baudilus from May 12 to May 20, and discover the life of Saint Baudilus.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Baudilus of Nimes

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Baudilus, martyr and patron of Nimes, as tradition has handed it down. It is not an official liturgical text. To end it on his feast day, May 20, begin on May 12. It is suited to asking for the courage to bear witness to your faith, and to entrusting a couple or a city to God. 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 Baudilus, pray for us." The small act proposed each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: Setting out to proclaim

According to tradition, Baudilus left the region of Orleans to proclaim Christ in the south. The Gospel is not something to keep to ourselves: it is meant to be shared.

Prayer: Lord, make me a missionary disciple, where I live and wherever you send me.

Today: Pray for someone around you who does not know Christ.

Day 2: A couple on mission

Baudilus set out with his wife. Their love opened onto a shared mission. Christian marriage is also a path of witness.

Prayer: Lord, bless married couples. May their love shine out and serve others.

Today: Pray for a couple you know, or give thanks for your own marriage.

Day 3: A land to evangelize

Nimes was a wealthy Roman city, attached to its gods. Baudilus brought it a new word. Every age has its idols, and every age needs the Gospel.

Prayer: Lord, I entrust my town and its people to you. May your Word be heard there.

Today: Pray for your town as you pass its city hall or its main church.

Day 4: Daring to speak

Baudilus interrupted a pagan sacrifice to proclaim the one God. He knew the risk. There are times when keeping silent would mean denying our faith.

Prayer: Lord, give me the courage to speak when I must, with respect and without fear.

Today: Do not hide your faith today if a chance comes to talk about it.

Day 5: The gift of his life

Baudilus was put to death by the crowd. He followed Christ to the end, giving his life as Christ did.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to give my life a little each day, out of love for you and for others.

Today: Do a service that costs you something, without telling anyone.

Day 6: Springs of life

The legend says that three springs gushed up where the martyr's head fell. It is a beautiful image: from a death given out of love, life is born.

Prayer: Lord, let the spring of your Spirit well up in me. Renew the grace of my baptism.

Today: Make the Sign of the Cross with holy water, remembering your baptism.

Day 7: A faithful wife

The wife of Baudilus gathered up his body and buried it. Her name is forgotten, but her faithfulness remains. Love also shows itself in grief.

Prayer: Lord, comfort widows and widowers. Support all who mourn someone they love.

Today: Check in on someone who is grieving.

Day 8: A place of pilgrimage

The tomb of Baudilus drew pilgrims for centuries. A church and a monastery were built there. The saints gather the people of God.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the shrines where so many people have prayed. Make my life a pilgrimage toward you.

Today: Visit a church dedicated to a saint, and pray there for a few minutes.

Day 9: A patron for the city

Nimes chose Baudilus as its patron, and his cult spread through France and Catalonia. The witness of one man bore fruit for multitudes.

Prayer: Lord, may my witness, however small, bear fruit. Through the intercession of Saint Baudilus, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Today: Pray for the diocese of Nimes and for your own diocese.

Living the novena with Saint Baudilus

Little is known for certain about Saint Baudilus, but his memory has come down through seventeen centuries. During these nine days, you can ask him for the courage to bear witness to your faith, entrust to him a couple you know, or pray for the town where you live. If you pass through Nimes, go and pray in the great church that bears his name.

Closing prayer

Saint Baudilus,
martyr and patron of Nimes,
you proclaimed Christ boldly
and gave your life for him.
Present to God the intention I have carried during these nine days.
Obtain for me the courage to bear witness,
faithfulness in love
and a heart open to those who are seeking God.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

PILGRIMAGE

Church of Saint-Baudile in Nimes

The church of Saint-Baudile is the largest church in Nimes. With its two spires, 70 meters (about 230 feet) high, it is often mistaken for the cathedral. It is dedicated to Saint Baudilus, a 3rd-century martyr of Nimes and patron saint of the city. Built in the 19th century, it carries on a very old devotion that began around the saint's tomb.

From the martyr's tomb to the great church

According to tradition, the wife of Baudilus buried his body at a place called the Valsainte. A church was built there as early as the 4th century, then a monastery, which lasted until the 16th century. The Saint-Baudile cemetery and neighborhood keep the memory of this shrine.

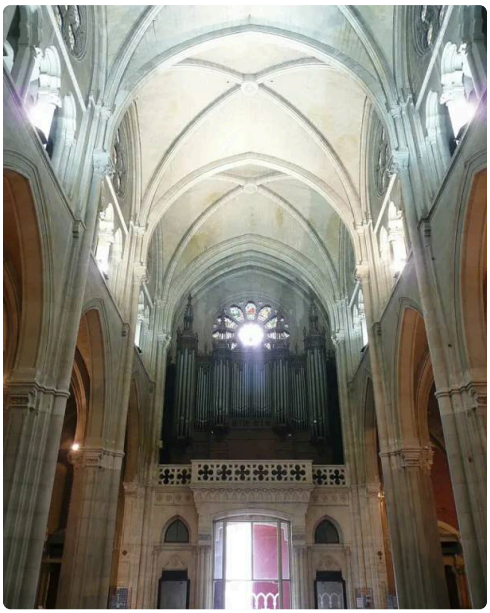
In the 19th century, Nimes was growing fast and wanted to give its patron a church worthy of him. The church of Saint-Baudile was built between 1867 and 1877, to plans by the Bordeaux architect Jean-Jules Mondet, who also designed the church of the Sacred Heart in Bordeaux.

Visiting the church of Saint-Baudile

The church is neo-Gothic, built in the shape of a Latin cross. It is 65 meters (about 213 feet) long and 30 meters (about 98 feet) wide at the transept, with vaults 20 meters (about 66 feet) high, and it can hold about 3,000 people. At the top of the facade, a statue by Auguste Bosc shows Saint Baudilus holding the sword and the palm of martyrdom. Inside, look for the stained glass windows by Joseph Villiet, the organs by Vincent Cavaillé-Coll, and two statues of angels with outspread wings by the sculptor Léopold Morice.

Praying on site

Before your visit, you can read the life of Saint Baudilus. In the church, ask him for the courage to bear witness, entrust to him couples involved in the Church and the city of Nimes, then recite the prayer to Saint Baudilus. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.



Inside the church of Saint-Baudile.

Other places of Saint Baudilus

- **Nimes**: the Saint-Baudile cemetery, which bears the name of the former shrine.
- **Nimes**: the Cathedral of Notre-Dame-et-Saint-Castor, in the heart of the Ecusson, seat of the diocese.
- **Sant Boi de Llobregat** (Catalonia): the town that bears his Catalan name.

Practical information

The church of Saint-Baudile is in Nimes, just outside the Ecusson, the city's historic center. It is a working parish church: modest dress and silence are requested, especially during services. Opening hours and Mass times may vary: check with the parish or the Nimes tourist office before you come.

Credits and sources

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