BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Buite

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: December 7

Saintspedia · saintspedia.com

IN BRIEF

Saint Buite

Irish monk who died in 521, missionary to the Picts and founder of Monasterboice according to tradition.

Feast day	December 7
Born	5th century, Ireland or Scotland, according to different traditions
Died	521, Monasterboice (Ireland), according to tradition
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Buite for Missionaries and for Ireland

Novena to Saint Buite

Monasterboice, the Monastery of Saint Buite

Credits and sources

Booklet offered by Saintspedia, the directory of Catholic saints: lives of the saints, prayers, novenas and places of pilgrimage, at saintspedia.com. Texts written by Saintspedia, except traditional prayers marked as such. Original prayers and novenas are not official liturgical texts. Free booklet, to print and share for personal, family or parish use; please do not sell it.

LIFE

Saint Buite

Saint Buite (Buite mac Bronach, also called Boethius in Latin, or Boyce) was an Irish monk of the late 5th and early 6th centuries. According to tradition, he founded the monastery of Monasterboice, in present-day County Louth, which still bears his name, and he died in 521. His life is known only through a late text in which legend plays a large part. His feast day is December 7.

Who was Saint Buite?

Buite belongs to the generation of founders who covered Ireland with monasteries in the decades following the mission of Saint Patrick. Irish genealogies link him to the Ciannachta clan, settled in the east of the island, and most of the saints of this clan are connected with the region of Glenn Gemin. Only one Life of Buite has come down to us. It is late and combines two accounts: the first, quite short, tells of a prophecy by Buite about the birth of another great saint, Columba; the second reports the miracles attributed to his body after his death. No precise biography can be drawn from it. The name of Monasterboice, in Irish *Mainistir Bhuithe*, "the monastery of Buite", remains the surest witness to his existence and his work.

Key dates in the life of Buite

- **5th century**: Born, according to different traditions, in Ireland in the Ciannachta clan, or in Scotland.
- **Youth**: Tradition makes him a disciple of Saint Patrick, which the chronology makes difficult to verify.
- **Years of formation**: According to his Life, he spends several years in Italy.
- **Afterward**: He goes on mission among the Picts, in the north of present-day Scotland.

- **Before 521**: He founds the monastery of Monasterboice, near present-day Drogheda.
- **521**: Death of Buite; tradition presents him as having foretold the birth of Saint Columba.
- **10th century**: The great Cross of Muiredach, one of the finest carved crosses in Ireland, is raised at Monasterboice.
- **1097**: The round tower of the monastery burns with its manuscripts and treasures.

A missionary between Ireland and Scotland

The Life of Buite says that he spent several years in Italy before becoming a missionary. He is said to have gone to preach the Gospel to the Picts, the people who lived in the north of Britain. This is why Scotland honors him too: the place name Carbuddo, in Angus, is said to come from *Castrum Butthi*, "the fort of Buite". The English name Boice derives from the Latin form *Boecius*, which explains why he is sometimes called Boethius. These details remain uncertain, but they show a man whose memory crossed the sea.

The founder of Monasterboice

Back in Ireland, Buite founded a monastery in eastern Meath, a few miles from the Boyne. Monasterboice became one of the most important religious and intellectual centers of the region. It remained so until the 12th century, when the founding of the nearby Cistercian abbey of Mellifont, in 1142, led to its decline. Today only ruins remain: two churches, a tall round tower and above all three great carved crosses, covered with scenes from the Bible.

The prophecy about Columba and the cult

The most famous story in his Life shows him, at the end of his life, foretelling the birth of a child who would become a light for Ireland and Scotland: Saint Columba, whom tradition says was born around 521, the very year of Buite's death. This story symbolically links two generations of missionary monks. The second part of the Life reports miracles obtained at his body, a sign of a cult paid very early at his tomb. Saint Buite is honored on December 7 in Ireland and Scotland.

What can we learn from Saint Buite?

We know little about Saint Buite, but what matters remains: a man traveled, proclaimed the Gospel across the sea, then founded a place where generations of monks prayed, studied and carved the story of salvation in stone. You can pray to him for missionaries, for Ireland and Scotland, and for those who hand on the faith to the next generation, as he foretold for Columba.

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

Where to pray to Saint Buite

- **Monasterboice** (County Louth, Ireland): the site of the monastery he founded, with its great crosses and round tower.
- **Carbuddo** (Angus, Scotland): a place whose name is said to keep his memory.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Buite for Missionaries and for Ireland

Saint Buite, an Irish monk who died in 521, went to proclaim the Gospel to the Picts before founding the monastery of Monasterboice. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him missionaries, Ireland and Scotland, and those who prepare the future of the faith.

Prayer to Saint Buite

Saint Buite,
monk of Ireland and traveler for God,
you crossed the sea to bring the Gospel
to peoples who did not know it.
Give us the courage to go out of ourselves
to proclaim Christ.

At Monasterboice you built a house of prayer
where generations sang the glory of God.
Bless the communities that pray,
and those who keep the memory of the faith.

You who foretold the coming of Columba,
teach us to hope in those who come after us,
and to hand on to them the light we have received.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Buite

- On his feast day, December 7.
- For missionaries and those who go far away to proclaim the Gospel.
- For the Church in Ireland and Scotland.
- For young people seeking their vocation.
- Before a journey or a pilgrimage.

A short invocation

> *Saint Buite, founder of Monasterboice,*
> *keep us faithful to the Cross of Christ.*
> *Pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Buite from November 29 to December 7, and read the life of Saint Buite.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Buite

Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is inspired by the life of Saint Buite, an Irish monk and, according to tradition, the founder of Monasterboice. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, December 7, begin on November 29. 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 Buite, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely. The episodes recounted come from a late Life, which mixes history and legend.

Day 1: A land receiving the Gospel

Buite was born in an Ireland that had just welcomed the Gospel through Saint Patrick and his companions. He grew up in a faith that was still young.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for those who brought the Gospel to my country and my family.

Act of the day: Pray for the parish where you were baptized.

Day 2: Disciple

Tradition makes Buite a disciple of Saint Patrick. Whether or not he knew him, he received the faith from those who had received it before him.

Prayer: Lord, give me the heart of a disciple, ready to learn and to listen.

Act of the day: Read a chapter of the Gospel slowly.

Day 3: Setting out

According to his Life, Buite left Ireland and spent several years in Italy. He let himself be moved in order to grow in faith.

Prayer: Lord, make me open to your calls, even when they unsettle me.

Act of the day: Willingly accept something unexpected today.

Day 4: Among the Picts

Buite then went to proclaim the Gospel to the Picts, in the north of Britain. He went to a foreign people, with no weapon but the Word.

Prayer: Lord, sustain the missionaries who proclaim your name in distant lands.

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

Day 5: Returning and founding

Back in Ireland, Buite founded Monasterboice. After the time of the road comes the time of putting down roots.

Prayer: Lord, help me take root where you have placed me, and build there with patience.

Act of the day: Take care of a commitment you had neglected.

Day 6: A house of prayer

At Monasterboice, generations of monks prayed, studied and copied the Scriptures. A faithful place of prayer passes through the centuries.

Prayer: Lord, bless the monks and nuns who pray for the world.

Act of the day: Take ten minutes of silent prayer.

Day 7: The Gospel carved in stone

The great crosses of Monasterboice tell the Bible in pictures. The monks wanted everyone to be able to read the story of salvation.

Prayer: Lord, may your Cross be at the center of my life and my home.

Act of the day: Pray for a few moments before a crucifix.

Day 8: Announcing the one who is coming

Tradition says that Buite foretold the birth of Saint Columba. One saint prepares the way for another; one generation hands on to the next.

Prayer: Lord, bless children and young people. Make the faith we hand on to them grow in their hearts.

Act of the day: Encourage a young person in their faith or in their plans.

Day 9: Entering into peace

Buite died in 521, and his tomb became a place where people came to pray. His life ended, but the monastery he founded went on giving thanks.

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

Act of the day: Pray for the departed members of your family and, if possible, attend Mass.

Closing prayer

Saint Buite,
missionary to the Picts and father of Monasterboice,
you carried the Gospel across the sea
and built a house of prayer in Ireland.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Keep me faithful to the Cross of Christ
and teach me to hand on the faith.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

PILGRIMAGE

Monasterboice, the Monastery of Saint Buite

Monasterboice, in Irish *Mainistir Bhuithe*, "the monastery of Buite", lies in County Louth, Ireland, about five miles northwest of Drogheda. According to tradition, Saint Buite founded a monastery here at the beginning of the 6th century, before his death in 521. The site, a national monument, preserves ruined churches, a round tower and some of the finest carved crosses in Ireland.

A great monastic center

After the death of its founder, Monasterboice became one of the main religious and educational centers of eastern Ireland. The monks prayed, studied and copied the Scriptures here. The monastery had a tall round tower, which served as bell tower, refuge and a place to keep books and precious objects. In 1097 the tower burned, and with it the manuscripts and treasures it held. In the 12th century, the founding of the nearby Cistercian abbey of Mellifont, in 1142, marked the decline of the old monastery, which was eventually abandoned.

What you see today

Visitors find an enclosure where the graves of a cemetery mingle with the walls of two ruined churches and the outline of the round tower. But it is above all the crosses that catch the eye. The most famous, Muiredach's Cross, raised in the 10th century, stands about five and a half meters high. Its faces are covered with scenes from the Old and New Testaments, most of which have been identified: the story of salvation can be read there, carved in stone. Another

great cross, more worn by time, stands near the tower, while a third, much simpler, may be among the oldest in the country. These crosses were made to teach: they were an open Bible for those who could not read.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Buite. At the foot of Muiredach's Cross, take time to "read" a scene from the Gospel, then entrust to the holy founder missionaries, Ireland and all who hand on the faith. You can say the prayer to Saint Buite there. The cemetery is still in use: silence and respect for the graves are expected. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Nearby

- **Mellifont Abbey** (County Louth): the first Cistercian abbey in Ireland, founded in 1142, a few miles away.
- **The Boyne Valley**: a landscape rich in historic sites, between Drogheda and Slane.

Practical information

Monasterboice is in the countryside north of Drogheda and is most easily reached by car. The site is in the open air; bring good shoes and rain gear. Access conditions and any guided tours may change: check with the Irish heritage services or the local tourist office before you come.

Credits and sources

Texts: Saintspedia (saintspedia.com). The sources cited in each part are those of the corresponding page of the website. Biographical data partly from Wikidata (CC0). Font: EB Garamond (SIL Open Font License).



More free booklets

Lives of the saints, prayers, novenas and places of pilgrimage: find all the booklets to print at

saintspedia.com