

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Cloud (Clodoald)

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: September 7

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IN BRIEF

Saint Cloud (Clodoald)

Merovingian prince and grandson of Clovis who became a hermit and priest, founder of the monastery of Saint-Cloud.

Feast day	September 7
Born	c. 522
Died	September 7, 560, Saint-Cloud, France
Era	6th century
Patron saint of	Saint-Cloud, nail makers

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Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Cloud (Clodoald)

Saint Clodoald, better known as Saint Cloud, was a sixth-century Merovingian prince, grandson of King Clovis and Saint Clotilde. As a child he escaped the murder of his two brothers by their uncles, then renounced the throne to become a hermit and later a priest. He founded a monastery on the banks of the Seine, at the place near Paris that now bears his name, Saint-Cloud. He died around 560, and his feast day is September 7.

Who was Saint Clodoald?

Clodoald was born around 522. He was the youngest of the three sons of Chlodomer, one of the four sons of Clovis and king of the Franks at Orléans. In 524 Chlodomer was killed at the battle of Vézeronce, in a war against the Burgundians. His three children, Theudoald, Gunthar and Clodoald, were then taken in by their grandmother, Saint Clotilde, who raised them in the Christian faith until they were old enough to share their father's kingdom.

He is said to have been the first Frankish prince to consecrate his life to God and to receive public veneration as a saint. The oldest witness to his life is Saint Gregory of Tours, who devotes a few lines to him in his *History of the Franks*. The details of his life come from later accounts, which should be read with caution.

Key dates

- **c. 522**: Born, son of King Chlodomer.
- **June 25, 524**: His father is killed at the battle of Vézeronce.
- **c. 525**: His two brothers are killed by their uncles Childebert and Clothar; he is rescued and hidden.

- **c. 540**: After the death of the hermit Severinus, his teacher, he withdraws to Provence.
- **c. 551**: Back near Paris, he is ordained a priest by Bishop Eusebius.
- **550s**: He settles at Novigentum, on the Seine, and founds a monastery there.
- **September 7, 560**: Dies at Novigentum, which will take the name Saint-Cloud.

The survivor of a massacre

The children's uncles, Childebert, king at Paris, and Clothar, king at Soissons, coveted their dead brother's kingdom. According to the account handed down by Gregory of Tours, they asked Clotilde to send them her grandsons, on the pretext of having them proclaimed kings. The two elder boys, Theudoald and Gunthar, about ten and seven years old, were put to death. One version of the story says that the uncles had first offered Clotilde a choice between death and tonsure for the children, since long hair was the sign of royal rank among the Franks.

Only the youngest, Clodoald, was saved by the devotion of a few loyal warriors. Gregory of Tours writes that they could not seize the third, Clodoald, who was saved with the help of brave men, and that, scorning an earthly kingdom, he gave himself to God. According to tradition, the child was hidden for a time, out of reach of his uncles' search.

Renouncing the crown

As a young man, Clodoald saw his survival as a sign of Providence. According to Gregory of Tours, he cut his own hair, thereby publicly giving up any claim to the throne, and became a cleric. He gave what remained of his property to churches and to the poor and placed himself under a hermit named Severinus,

who lived at the gates of Paris, where the church of Saint-Séverin stands today. From him he received the religious habit. Seeing that he no longer sought power, his uncles left him in peace and even gave him some land.

After Severinus died, around 540, Clodoald went into hiding in Provence. Local people soon came to find him. A story that tradition presents as a miracle tells that he gave his own cloak to a poor man, and that the garment shone with light the following night. He stayed about ten years in Provence before returning to the Paris region.

Priest and founder at Saint-Cloud

On his return, around 551, Bishop Eusebius of Paris ordained him a priest, according to some sources at the request of the people. Gregory of Tours confirms that he died a priest. Fleeing honors, Clodoald withdrew to a hill on the banks of the Seine, downstream from Paris, in a place called *Novigentum*. There he built a church dedicated to Saint Martin of Tours. Disciples joined him and a community formed, which he endowed with the property received from his uncles and placed under the Church of Paris.

He died on September 7, 560, at about thirty-eight. His tomb quickly became a place of pilgrimage, and Novigentum took the name *Sanctus Clodoaldus*, Saint-Cloud. His church, rebuilt several times, became a collegiate church. In 1589 the funeral of King Henry III was celebrated there. During the French Revolution his relics were destroyed, except for an arm saved by a schoolteacher and returned in 1848, and a vertebra given back in 1863.

Why is Saint Cloud the patron saint of nail makers?

Saint Cloud is the patron of the town of Saint-Cloud, which grew around his tomb and bears his name. He is also invoked as patron of nail makers, a patronage that comes from the sound of his name: in French, *clou* means

"nail." Beyond these traditional patronages, his story makes him a natural intercessor for families torn apart by violence or inheritance, for children in danger and for those who must give up an ambition.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Cloud in art

Images of Saint Cloud vary. He may appear as a young prince, recalling his royal birth, or as a priest or monk, recalling the life he chose. Scenes from his story, such as his meeting with the hermit Severinus, appear in old engravings. The church of Saint-Clodoald in Saint-Cloud has a series of stained-glass windows telling his life, made by Maurice Tastemain in 1929.

What can we learn from Saint Cloud?

Saint Cloud is a saint of renunciation. Born to reign, he survived the violence of his own family and chose not to enter into the logic of power and revenge. He preferred prayer, poverty and service to others. His life speaks to anyone who has been hurt by those closest to them and who seeks peace rather than power.

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

Where to pray to Saint Cloud

- **Saint-Cloud** (west of Paris, France): the church of Saint-Clodoald, which keeps relics of the saint and the 1929 windows of his life by Maurice Tastemain.
- **Paris**: the church of Saint-Séverin, on the site of the hermitage where he was formed.
- **France**: the many churches and towns that bear his name, especially in the Dordogne and the Yvelines.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Cloud for Divided Families and Children

There is no widely used traditional prayer to Saint Cloud in English. Saintspedia offers this original prayer, inspired by his life: the child who survived the murder of his brothers, the prince who renounced the throne, the hermit and priest who founded a monastery on the banks of the Seine.

The prince who chose God

A grandson of Clovis, Clodoald could have reigned. He saw the violence of his own uncles take his brothers' lives. Rather than seek revenge or power, he cut his own hair, the sign of royalty among the Franks, and gave himself to God. His life speaks to those who have been hurt by their families and to those who seek peace rather than power.

Prayer to Saint Cloud

Saint Cloud, as a child you escaped the violence of your own family: take under your protection children who are mistreated and those who grow up in fear.

You refused the crown and refused revenge: teach me to give up what divides me from others, and to seek first the Kingdom of God.

You gave your cloak to a poor man: make me generous, even when I have little.

You fled honors for prayer: help me to find a time of silence with God every day.

Pray for families divided by money or inheritance, and obtain for them the grace of reconciliation.

I entrust to you my intention: (name it in silence). Saint Cloud, pray for us. Amen.

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia, free to use for personal and community prayer.

When to pray this prayer

Saint Clodoald, or Saint Cloud, is celebrated on September 7. You can pray to him:

- during a family conflict or a difficult inheritance;
- for a child in danger or a child who has suffered violence;
- when facing an important life choice, or when you must give up an ambition;
- when visiting Saint-Cloud or the church of Saint-Séverin in Paris.

A short prayer for divided families

> *Lord, you know the wounds of our families. Through the prayers of Saint Cloud, who did not answer the violence of his own kin with revenge, heal what is broken between us, soften hardened hearts and lead us to reconciliation. Amen.*

To learn more about him, read the life of Saint Cloud, or pray the novena to Saint Cloud.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Cloud (Clodoald)

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Clodoald, better known as Saint Cloud, as told by Saint Gregory of Tours and later tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, September 7, begin it on August 30. It can also be prayed at any time, especially for a divided family, a child in danger or an important life decision.

How to pray this novena

Each day, place your intention before God, read the short meditation, then say the prayer of the day followed by an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. The small act suggested for the day helps you live in Saint Cloud's spirit of peace, detachment and prayer. You can pray it alone, as a family or with a parish group.

Day 1: An orphan in a royal family

Clodoald lost his father, King Chlodomer, in battle when he was about two years old. Born into a royal family, he was nevertheless a fragile child, dependent on others. God watches over the smallest and most vulnerable, even when the powerful forget them.

Prayer: Lord, protect orphans and children who have lost a parent, and give them people who love them.

Today: Pray for a child who is grieving, or help a family that has lost a parent.

Day 2: A grandmother's faith

Saint Clotilde took in her three grandsons and raised them in the Christian faith. Grandparents often hand on the faith quietly, through prayer, stories and love. Clodoald's whole life would bear the mark of what he received from her.

Prayer: Lord, bless grandparents, and thank you for those who taught me to pray.

Today: Call or visit a grandparent or an elderly person, or pray for those who have died.

Day 3: Violence in the family

Clodoald's uncles, greedy for power, had his two brothers killed. The worst violence sometimes comes from those who should protect us. The Church does not hide such wounds, and God does not abandon those who carry them.

Prayer: Lord, comfort children who suffer violence at home, and give them protectors and safety.

Today: Pray for children in danger, or support an organization that protects them.

Day 4: Saved by faithful friends

Clodoald was saved by a few loyal warriors who risked their lives for him. In the darkest moments, God often acts through the courage of ordinary people. Their names are lost, but their faithfulness made a saint possible.

Prayer: Lord, make me faithful and courageous when someone weaker needs my help.

Today: Stand up for someone who is treated unfairly.

Day 5: Cutting his hair

As a young man, Clodoald cut his own long hair, the sign of royalty among the Franks, and gave up any claim to the throne. He refused to enter the cycle of power and revenge. Choosing God sometimes means giving up what the world sees as our right.

Prayer: Lord, free me from the desire for revenge and from the hunger for power. Teach me to seek first your Kingdom.

Today: Let go of a grudge, and pray for the person who hurt you.

Day 6: A disciple of the hermit Severinus

Clodoald placed himself under the guidance of Severinus, a hermit who lived at the gates of Paris. The young prince became a humble disciple. No one grows in the spiritual life alone; we need guides who have walked the road before us.

Prayer: Lord, give me wise guides, and the humility to listen to them.

Today: Seek the advice of a priest or a wise friend about a question in your life.

Day 7: The cloak given away

In Provence, tradition says, Clodoald gave his own cloak to a poor man, and the garment shone with light the following night. Like Saint Martin, to whom he would dedicate his church, he saw Christ in the poor. What we give in love becomes light.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to the poor around me, and make me generous even when I have little.

Today: Give clothing or something useful to a person in need.

Day 8: Priest and founder

Ordained a priest around 551, Clodoald withdrew to a hill above the Seine and founded a community there. He gave the land he had received from his uncles to God's service. The inheritance that had cost his brothers their lives became a place of prayer.

Prayer: Lord, bless priests and religious communities, and turn what has hurt us into a source of good.

Today: Pray for a priest you know, by name.

Day 9: A town that bears his name

Clodoald died on September 7, 560, at about thirty-eight. His tomb drew pilgrims, and the village took his name: Saint-Cloud. The prince who refused a kingdom on earth is remembered far longer than the kings who sought power.

Prayer: Saint Cloud, present our intentions to the Lord, and help us to choose peace, prayer and service. Amen.

Today: Pray for reconciliation in a family you know that is divided.

Closing prayer

> *Lord our God, you saved Saint Cloud from the violence of his own family and led him to renounce an earthly crown for your Kingdom. Through his prayers, protect children in danger, reconcile divided families and free our hearts from revenge and the thirst for power. Grant the intention I place before you in this novena, if it is according to your will. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

To learn more about him, read the life of Saint Cloud or pray the prayer to Saint Cloud.

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