BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Conogan

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: October 16

IN BRIEF

Saint Conogan

6th-century Breton monk from Wales, hermit on the Élorn and bishop of Quimper according to tradition.

Feast day	October 16
Born	5th or early 6th century, Wales, according to tradition
Died	6th century, Quimper, according to tradition
Canonized	immemorial cult (local cult)
Era	5th century
Patron saint of	Lanvénégen, The sick suffering from fever

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Conogan for the Sick and for Brittany

Novena to Saint Conogan

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Conogan

Saint Conogan (Konogan, Quénégan, also called Guénoc or Albinus) was a 6th-century Breton saint, who came from Wales according to tradition. A companion of Saint Paul Aurelian, a hermit on the banks of the Élorn, he is said to have become bishop of Quimper after Saint Corentin. His story is poorly known and mixed with legend, but his cult has remained alive in many chapels of Lower Brittany. His feast day is October 16.

Who was Saint Conogan?

Conogan belongs to the group of saints from the island of Britain who evangelized Armorica in the 5th and 6th centuries. No ancient Life has come down to us: what we know of him comes from local traditions, the episcopal lists of Quimper, place names and the breviaries of the diocese. These sources are late and sometimes contradictory, to the point that some authors have doubted his existence. His story must therefore be read with caution. His cult, on the other hand, is well attested: the diocese of Quimper and Léon still counts him among its saints.

Key dates in the life of Conogan

- **5th or early 6th century**: Born in Wales according to tradition; another, later tradition has him born at the manor of La Palue, near Landerneau.
- **First half of the 6th century**: He crosses to Armorica among the companions of Saint Paul Aurelian.
- **Afterward**: He leads the life of a hermit on the north bank of the Élorn, at Beuzit, which will take his name.
- **According to tradition**: He places himself in the school of Saint Winwaloe at Landévennec.

- **6th century**: He becomes bishop of Cornouaille (Quimper), second or third successor of Saint Corentin according to the lists.
- **6th century**: Dies at Quimper, according to tradition.
- **1680**: An inventory mentions his head and an arm among the relics of the church of Beuzit-Conogan.
- **1791**: The parish of Beuzit-Conogan is suppressed and divided between Landerneau and Saint-Thonan.

The companion of Saint Paul Aurelian

According to hagiographical tradition, Conogan left Wales to accompany Saint Paul Aurelian, the future bishop of Léon, to Armorica. He then settled on the banks of the Élorn, downstream from Landerneau, in a place called Beuzit, "the boxwood" in Breton. He lived there as a hermit, and his house gradually became a small community, like many early monasteries of that time. Tradition adds that he wished to be formed by Saint Winwaloe, and that the abbey of Landévennec helped spread his cult.

Bishop of Cornouaille

The lists of the bishops of Quimper place Conogan among the first successors of Saint Corentin. Some have tried to identify him with a "Venecandus" present at the council of Tours in 461 and with an "Albinus" present at the council of Vannes in the 460s. These identifications raise a problem of chronology, since tradition has him arriving in Armorica in the time of King Childebert, in the 6th century. They therefore remain very uncertain.

Popular memory made him a healer, to whom crowds came for help, especially against fevers. The chapel and cemetery of Saint-Conogan, on the edge of Quimper, are said to preserve the memory of the place where he practiced this charity.

Devotion and traditions

Conogan is celebrated on October 16. His cult is attested in many places in Lower Brittany. At Beuzit-Conogan, the church, of which only the bell tower and some walls remain, still kept his head and an arm in reliquaries in the 17th century; every third Sunday of May a troménie, a much-frequented procession, was held there until the parish was suppressed in 1791. At Beuzec-Cap-Sizun, tradition points to the "boat of Saint Conogan," in fact a fallen menhir, on which he is said to have crossed the sea.

He is shown as a bishop, with miter and crozier, as in the statue in the cathedral of Saint-Corentin in Quimper. His name may survive in that of Tréogan, the "trève (chapel district) of Conogan."

What can we learn from Saint Conogan?

Even if his story is uncertain, Conogan bears witness to the faith of the first monks who came from across the sea and made Brittany a Christian land. A hermit and then a pastor, he united prayer and service of the people. Bretons long invoked him for health, and his memory remains attached to chapels where people still pray. You can pray to him for the sick, for bishops and for Brittany.

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

Where to pray to Saint Conogan

- **Quimper** (Finistère): the cathedral of Saint-Corentin, where his statue stands, and the chapel of Saint-Conogan, at Moulin Vert.
- **Beuzec-Cap-Sizun** (Finistère): the chapel of Saint-Conogan and the stone "boat."

- **Beuzit-Conogan**, near Landerneau (Finistère): the remains of the church of the former parish that bore his name.
- **Lanvénégen** (Morbihan): the church of Saint-Conogan, of which he is the patron.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Conogan for the Sick and for Brittany

Saint Conogan, who came from Wales with Saint Paul Aurelian according to tradition, was a hermit on the banks of the Élorn and then bishop of Quimper. Bretons long invoked him for health, especially against fevers. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him the sick, pastors and Brittany.

Prayer to Saint Conogan

Saint Conogan,
you who crossed the sea
to bring the Gospel to Armorica,
give me a heart ready to go
wherever the Lord sends me.

Hermit on the banks of the Élorn,
you sought God in prayer,
then became a shepherd of his people.
Bless our bishops and our priests,
and make us attentive to those who suffer.

You to whom crowds came in prayer
to be healed,
present to the Lord the sick I entrust to you,
those who have a fever and those who despair.
Watch over Brittany and keep it in the faith.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Conogan

- On his feast day, October 16.
- For a sick person, especially one with a fever.
- For the bishop and priests of the diocese of Quimper and Léon.
- At a pardon or a visit to one of his chapels.
- For those who must leave their country.

A prayer for the sick

> *Lord, physician of bodies and souls,*
> *relieve those who suffer.*
> *Saint Conogan, pray for them. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Conogan from October 8 to 16, and read the life of Saint Conogan.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Conogan

This novena offers nine days of prayer with Saint Conogan, a monk from Wales, hermit on the Élorn and bishop of Quimper according to tradition. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. To finish it on his feast day, October 16, begin on October 8. You can also pray it at any other time, for example for a sick person.

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 Conogan, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely. The episodes mentioned come from Breton tradition and are not all historical.

Day 1: Leaving one's country

According to tradition, Conogan left Wales to cross the sea. He left his land to serve God elsewhere.

Prayer: Lord, give me an open heart, ready to follow you wherever you call me.

Act of the day: Pray for people who have had to leave their country.

Day 2: Companion of Saint Paul Aurelian

Conogan is said to have been one of the companions of Saint Paul Aurelian. No one evangelizes alone: mission is the work of a community.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for those who walk with me in the faith. Make us brothers and sisters.

Act of the day: Do a service for a member of your parish.

Day 3: The hermit of the Élorn

On the banks of the Élorn, Conogan lived in prayer and solitude. His house became a place where people sought God.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to pray in silence, and make my home a place of peace.

Act of the day: Take a time of silent prayer.

Day 4: In the school of a master

Tradition says he wished to be formed by Saint Winwaloe, at Landévennec. Even saints need teachers.

Prayer: Lord, give me the humility to learn, and sure guides on your path.

Act of the day: Read a page by a spiritual author.

Day 5: Shepherd of his people

Having become bishop of Cornouaille according to the ancient lists, Conogan left solitude to serve the Church.

Prayer: Lord, bless our bishop and our priests, and give them the heart of a good shepherd.

Act of the day: Pray for the bishop of your diocese.

Day 6: With the sick

Popular memory made him a healer, to whom crowds came, especially against fevers.

Prayer: Lord, relieve the sick and comfort those who care for them.

Act of the day: Visit or call a sick person.

Day 7: The stone boat

At Beuzec-Cap-Sizun, a stone is called the "boat of Saint Conogan." The legend speaks of the boldness of those who entrusted everything to God to cross the sea.

Prayer: Lord, when the crossing frightens me, give me the trust to lean on you.

Act of the day: Entrust a specific fear to God.

Day 8: The procession of the faithful

At Beuzit, a troménie was held every year in his honor. For centuries, the people walked in prayer behind his relics.

Prayer: Lord, make my life a pilgrimage toward you, with my brothers and sisters.

Act of the day: Take a short walk while praying the rosary.

Day 9: The faith of Brittany

Conogan is one of the saints who planted the faith in Brittany. The chapels that bear his name keep his memory.

Prayer: Lord, keep Brittany and our families in the faith. Through the intercession of Saint Conogan, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass, or visit a chapel in your area.

Closing prayer

Saint Conogan,
monk who came from the sea,
hermit of the Élorn and shepherd of Cornouaille,
you served God in prayer and charity.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Watch over the sick and over Brittany,
and keep me faithful to the Gospel.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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