

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Dié

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: June 19

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IN BRIEF

Saint Dié

7th-century hermit, traditionally the founder of the monastery from which the town of Saint-Dié-des-Vosges grew.

Feast day	June 19
Died	679, according to tradition, Val de Galilée, present-day Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, according to tradition
Canonized	time-immemorial veneration
Era	7th century
Patron saint of	Saint-Dié-des-Vosges

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Dié for the Vosges and for Those Who Seek God

Novena to Saint Dié

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Dié

Saint Dié, also called Deodatus (Déodat or Dieudonné in French), was a holy hermit of the 7th century, venerated since the Middle Ages in the upper Meurthe valley, in the Vosges. According to tradition, he founded a monastery around which the town that bears his name, Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, later grew. In reality very little is known about him, and his life comes mostly from late and legendary accounts. His feast day is June 19.

Who was Saint Dié?

Saint Dié belongs to the generation of hermits and monastery founders who, in the 7th century, cleared and evangelized the Vosges mountains, like Saint Romaric at Remiremont or Saint Hydulphus at Moyenmoutier. But historians stress that no document of his time tells of his life. The first account, the *Life of Saint Deodatus*, was written by a monk in the 11th century, about four hundred years after his death. Its author had little reliable information and embroidered a great deal. His story should therefore be read as a pious tradition, which speaks above all of the faith of the generations who prayed to him.

Key dates

- **7th century**: According to tradition, Deodatus is bishop of Nevers before leaving his office for the solitary life; historians much debate this title.
- **Mid-7th century**: According to the *Life*, he lives as a wandering hermit, in Alsace and then in the Vosges.
- **c. 669**: He settles in the upper Meurthe valley, at the place since called Petit-Saint-Dié.

- **Afterwards**: He founds the monastery of Les Jointures, at the meeting of the Meurthe and the Robache, in the "Val de Galilée."
- **679**: The traditional date of his death, on a June 19.
- **11th century**: The first *Life of Saint Deodatus* is written.
- **1777**: The Diocese of Saint-Dié, which bears his name, is created.

The hermit of the Meurthe valley

According to the 11th-century *Life*, Deodatus gave up the office of bishop to seek God in solitude. After wandering in Alsace, he crossed the Vosges and settled in a wild, forested valley. A local tradition tells that he made a spring gush forth by throwing his axe into the fog: this is the fountain of Petit-Saint-Dié, where he is said to have built his hut. He lived there poorly, in prayer and work.

Disciples joined him. He then founded, at the foot of the hill, a monastery called "Les Jointures," because it lay at the junction of two rivers. Tradition makes him a friend of Saint Hydulphus, founder of the neighboring abbey of Moyenmoutier. According to the accounts, Deodatus and his companions cleared land and founded many communities in the surrounding valleys. He is said to have died around 679, on a June 19.

The "good man" of the mountain folk

Over the centuries, the people of the Vosges mountains made Saint Dié a familiar figure, whom they simply called "le bonhomme," the good man. The Col du Bonhomme and the village of Le Bonhomme probably owe him their names. A popular legend tells that a count sent him provisions every week on a donkey, and that when the donkey was eaten by a wolf, the wolf had to do the job in its place. These stories, often full of humor, show how close the saint was to the people. Pilgrims also came to his tomb, the sick in particular.

Veneration and iconography

Dié has been honored as a saint by the Catholic Church since the early Middle Ages. His relics were kept by the monks, then by the canons of the collegiate church of Saint-Dié. The town that formed around this sanctuary took his name, and the diocese created in 1777 also bears his name. His feast, long celebrated on other dates depending on the diocese, is now fixed on June 19. He is shown as a bishop, with a miter and a crosier, recalling the title of bishop of Nevers that tradition gives him.

What to remember about Saint Dié

Even if the history of Saint Dié remains uncertain, his memory says something true: the Christian faith took root in the Vosges thanks to men who chose solitude, prayer and the work of the land. The holy hermit became the spiritual father of a whole valley. He invites us to seek God in silence and to serve humbly where we live. You can pray to him for the Diocese of Saint-Dié, for the people of the mountains, and for those seeking a path of silence and prayer.

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

Where to pray to Saint Dié

- **Saint-Dié-des-Vosges** (Vosges): the cathedral, the cloister and the church of Notre-Dame-de-Galilée, on the site of the former monastery.
- **Saint-Dié-des-Vosges**: the Petit-Saint-Dié, the traditional site of his hermitage, near the spring that bears his name.
- **Moyenmoutier** (Vosges): the former abbey founded by Saint Hydulphus, his friend according to tradition.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Dié for the Vosges and for Those Who Seek God

Saint Dié, or Deodatus, has been venerated since the Middle Ages as the hermit who founded, in the upper Meurthe valley, the monastery from which the town of Saint-Dié-des-Vosges was born. His life is known to us mostly through tradition. This prayer is an original composition inspired by what the Church and the people of the Vosges have kept of him, not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him those who seek God in silence, the people of the mountains and the diocese that bears his name.

Prayer to Saint Dié

Saint Dié,
you whom we call Deodatus, "given by God,"
you left honors behind
to seek the Lord in the solitude of the forests.

In the valley of the Meurthe,
you prayed, worked the land
and gathered brothers around you.
The mountain folk called you "the good man,"
for you were close to the little ones and the poor.

Teach us a taste for silence and prayer,
the courage of patient work,
and the kindness that brings God near.

Watch over the Diocese of Saint-Dié and the Vosges,
over those who live from the forest and the fields,
over the sick who once came to pray at your tomb,
and over all who seek God with a sincere heart.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Dié

- On his feast day, June 19.
- Before a spiritual retreat or a time of silence.
- For the Diocese of Saint-Dié and its parishes.
- For farmers, foresters and the people of the mountains.
- For a sick person who needs comfort.

A short hiker's prayer

Saint Dié is linked to the paths of the Vosges mountains. On a trail or a walk, you can say:

> *Lord, in the midst of your creation, I give you thanks.*
> *Guide my steps as you guided those of Saint Dié.*
> *Saint Dié, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Dié from June 11 to June 19, and read the life of Saint Dié.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Dié

This novena is an original composition inspired by what tradition reports of Saint Dié, or Deodatus, a 7th-century hermit venerated in the Vosges. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, June 19, begin on June 11. You can also pray it at any time of the year, for example before a retreat or a time of discernment.

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. Finish with: "Saint Dié, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live out concretely what you have prayed.

Day 1: Given by God

The name Deodatus means "given by God." Every life is a gift, and each of us is given to others. Saint Dié invites us to receive our existence as a present.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the gift of life. Make me a gift for those around me.

Today: Thank a person who is a gift of God to you.

Day 2: Leaving honors behind

According to tradition, Deodatus left the office of bishop for the solitary life. He sought God more than the recognition of men.

Prayer: Lord, free me from the desire to be admired, and teach me to seek your will alone.

Today: Refrain from putting yourself forward in a conversation.

Day 3: The pilgrim

The *Life* of Saint Dié shows him walking a long way, from Alsace to the Vosges, before finding the place of his rest. The Christian life is a pilgrimage, and God accompanies our searching.

Prayer: Lord, guide my steps when I am looking for my way, and give me patience to wait for your hour.

Today: Take a silent walk, entrusting to God a question that weighs on you.

Day 4: The spring

Tradition tells that a spring gushed forth where Saint Dié settled. God makes life gush forth where we do not expect it. Christ promises living water to those who thirst.

Prayer: Lord, source of living water, quench my thirsting heart.

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

Day 5: The hermit's silence

In his hut at Petit-Saint-Dié, the hermit lived in silence and prayer. Silence is not emptiness: it is the space where God can speak.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to be silent in order to listen to you.

Today: Take fifteen minutes of complete silence, without screens or noise.

Day 6: Work of the hands

Saint Dié and his companions, tradition says, cleared the forest and cultivated the land. Humble work, offered to God, becomes prayer.

Prayer: Lord, bless the work of my hands and make it an offering to you.

Today: Do a manual task carefully and in a spirit of prayer.

Day 7: Gathering brothers

The hermit became the father of a community: disciples came to him, and he founded the monastery of Les Jointures. True solitude opens us to fellowship.

Prayer: Lord, bless religious communities, and teach me to build fellowship around me.

Today: Pray for a monastery or religious community you know.

Day 8: The good man of the humble

The mountain folk of the Vosges called Saint Dié "the good man." They saw him as a friend, close to their sorrows and joys. Holiness makes a person approachable.

Prayer: Lord, make me simple and welcoming, close to the little ones and the poor.

Today: Offer a kind word to someone who is rarely noticed.

Day 9: A father for a valley

Around Saint Dié's monastery a town was born, and a diocese now bears his name. What begins in hidden prayer can bear fruit for centuries.

Prayer: Lord, make my life bear fruit, even if it is hidden. Through the intercession of Saint Dié, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Today: Pray for your diocese, your town and those who live there.

Living the novena with Saint Dié

Little is known of the history of Saint Dié, but the Christian people have prayed to him for over a thousand years. This novena invites you to enter that long chain of prayer. Take advantage of these June days, on the threshold of summer, to spend time in nature, to be silent and to entrust to God what concerns you. You can also carry in your prayer the Vosges and the Diocese of Saint-Dié, monastic communities, and the sick who once came to seek comfort at his tomb.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Dié,*
> *hermit of the Vosges forests and father of a valley,*
> *you sought God in silence*
> *and served your brothers with kindness.*
> *Present to God the intention I have carried during these nine days.*
> *Obtain for me a simple heart,*
> *a taste for prayer*
> *and the joy of serving.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

Credits and sources

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