BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Efflam

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: November 6

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IN BRIEF

Saint Efflam

Semi-legendary Breton saint from Ireland, hermit on the coast of the Trégor and patron of Plestin-les-Grèves.

Feast day	November 6
Born	5th, 6th or 7th century, according to different sources, Ireland, according to tradition
Died	Plestin-les-Grèves (Côtes-d'Armor), according to tradition
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	5th century
Patron saint of	Plestin-les-Grèves, burns and inflammations

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Church of Saint-Efflam, Plestin-les-Grèves

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Efflam

Saint Efflam (Efflamm in Old Breton) is a Breton saint of the early Middle Ages who, according to tradition, came from Ireland and lived as a hermit on the coast of the Trégor, near Plestin-les-Grèves, in the Côtes-d'Armor. An Irish prince married to Saint Enora, he is said to have chosen with her to consecrate his life to God. His Life, written several centuries after him, is largely legendary. His feast day is November 6.

Who was Saint Efflam?

Efflam belongs to the great family of the founding saints of Brittany, the monks and hermits who came from Britain or Ireland between the 5th and 7th centuries. Historians describe him as semi-legendary. Even the dates differ: depending on the author, he is placed in the 5th, 6th or 7th century. His Latin Life was written at the end of the 11th or the beginning of the 12th century, among the clergy of Tréguier, who also wished to highlight the origins of their Church. It therefore mixes the memory of a real hermit, whose cult has been rooted in Plestin for centuries, with wondrous tales, such as his meeting with King Arthur.

Key dates in the life of Efflam

- **5th to 7th century (sources differ)**: Born in Ireland, the son of a king according to tradition.
- **Youth**: He is married very young to Enora, a king's daughter; the two spouses make a vow of chastity.
- **Shortly after**: He leaves Ireland and lands on the coast of the Trégor, at the Lieue de Grève, near Plestin.

- **Later**: He lives as a hermit in the nearby forest; Enora joins him and lives in an oratory he has had built for her.
- **Unknown date**: Death of Efflam; according to legend, Enora dies at the same moment.
- **Late 11th or early 12th century**: His Latin Life is written in the milieu of Tréguier.
- **1636**: Albert Le Grand tells his life in his *Lives of the Saints of Armorican Brittany*.
- **June 26, 1819**: Bones recognized as his relics are discovered in the church of Plestin.

The prince who chose God

According to the Life, Efflam was the son of a king of Ireland. He was married very young to Enora, daughter of another ruler. But the young man had already promised his life to God. With his wife's consent, he made a vow of chastity and, supported by an angel, fled so as not to give in to the pressure of those around him. Like many monks of his time, he took to the sea and reached Armorica.

He is said to have landed on the long beach called the Lieue de Grève, between Plestin and Saint-Michel-en-Grève, facing a great rock. Another tradition has him landing with Enora at the port of Le Yaudet, near Lannion, in a boat of hides stretched over wooden laths. He is said to have first lived for a while with Saint Gestin, then built a hermitage in the forest that then lined the coast. Popular tradition gives him several companions, Kirio, Tuder, Kemo, Haran or Nerin, whose names are found in the place names of the area; it was a hymn composed in 1897 by the parish priest of Plestin that fixed this list.

Efflam, Arthur and the dragon

The most famous story in his Life brings him together with King Arthur. Arthur was pursuing a dragon that terrorized the country. Exhausted by thirst, he met Efflam, who made a spring gush out for him, the one still shown at Saint-Efflam. Then the hermit prayed before the monster's cave, and the dragon went and threw itself into the sea. Albert Le Grand, in the 17th century, adds that the dragon demanded a human victim every year.

This story is not historical. It expresses, in the language of images, the victory of Christ over the forces of evil and over paganism. Some have also seen in it the memory of frequent drownings in the bay, where the tide comes in very fast: until the 19th century, crossing the beach on a rising tide was dangerous.

Enora, the consecrated wife

Enora could not resign herself to living far from her husband. She joined him in Armorica, but not to resume married life: Efflam had an oratory built for her some distance from his own, and each lived in prayer. The legend adds that they died at the same moment. This story, rare in Breton hagiography, makes Efflam and Enora a couple united by the same consecration to God.

Devotion and art

Saint Efflam is the patron of Plestin-les-Grèves. The parish church dedicated to him keeps a 15th or 16th-century tomb on which he is shown lying. It was there that bones recognized as his relics were found in 1819. By the beach, the hamlet of Saint-Efflam has a chapel and a spring that bear his name. He is also honored at Kervignac, Pédernec, Morlaix and Langoëlan, where an oratory was blessed in 2016, and by many statues in the Trégor, one of which, at Trébeurden, shows him in rich costume.

Popular devotion calls on him for the healing of burns, inflammations, abscesses and boils, and of dislocated limbs. At Kervignac, people leave nails at the foot of his statue; at Langoëlan, he is invoked against fire, lightning and sudden death.

What can we learn from Saint Efflam?

Behind the wonders, tradition keeps the portrait of a man who left everything, rank, country and human plans, to follow Christ. His story with Enora reminds us that human love and God's call are not opposed: they can meet in the same gift of self. You can pray to him for married couples, for those discerning their vocation and for those who suffer from burns or inflammations.

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

Where to pray to Saint Efflam

- **Plestin-les-Grèves** (Côtes-d'Armor): the church of Saint-Efflam, with his tomb, and, by the beach, the chapel and spring of Saint-Efflam.
- **Kervignac** (Morbihan): the chapel of Saint-Efflam, where nails are left at the foot of his statue.
- **Pédernec** (Côtes-d'Armor) and **Morlaix** (Finistère): old chapels dedicated to him.
- **Langoëlan** (Morbihan): the oratory blessed in 2016 on the site of his former chapel.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Efflam for Married Couples and Those Seeking Their Vocation

Saint Efflam, a prince from Ireland according to tradition, gave up his rank to live as a hermit on the coast of the Trégor, while his wife Enora also consecrated herself to God. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him married couples, those seeking their vocation and those who suffer in their bodies.

Prayer to Saint Efflam

Saint Efflam,
son of a king who became poor for Christ,
you left your land and your honors
to seek God by the sea.
Teach me to prefer the Lord to everything.

With Enora, your wife,
you offered your life to God in one same impulse.
Bless married couples and families,
and help those who are seeking their vocation
to hear the call of the Lord.

You who, according to tradition, overcame the dragon by prayer,
keep us from the forces of evil.
Relieve those who suffer from burns and inflammations,
and protect those who cross the shores and the sea.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Efflam

- On his feast day, November 6, preferably in a church or chapel dedicated to him.
- For married couples, especially when their union is being tested.
- For young people discerning their vocation.
- For the healing of burns, abscesses and inflammations.
- When facing a fear or a trial that seems stronger than you.

A short invocation

> *Saint Efflam and Saint Enora,*
> *pray for our homes and for those who give themselves to God. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Efflam from October 29 to November 6, and read the life of Saint Efflam.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Efflam

This novena accompanies Saint Efflam, an Irish prince who, according to tradition, became a hermit on the coast of the Trégor. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. To finish it on his feast day, November 6, begin on October 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 Efflam, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely. The episodes mentioned come from his Life, written several centuries after him and rich in legend: they tell us less about history than about the meaning of his holiness.

Day 1: A king's son

According to tradition, Efflam was born the son of a king in Ireland. He had everything the world could offer, and yet his heart was looking for something else.

Prayer: Lord, let nothing I own keep me far from you.

Act of the day: Give something you value to someone who needs it.

Day 2: A promise to God

Married very young to Enora, Efflam had already given his life to God. The two spouses agreed to consecrate themselves to the Lord.

Prayer: Lord, bless married couples and help them lead one another toward you.

Act of the day: Pray for a couple you know.

Day 3: The angel's support

The Life tells that an angel supported Efflam in temptation. God does not leave alone those who want to be faithful to him.

Prayer: Angel of God, my guardian, enlighten me and support me in my struggles.

Act of the day: Pray to your guardian angel at the beginning and end of the day.

Day 4: The crossing

Efflam took to the sea and landed on the shore of Plestin. Like so many monks from overseas, he brought the Gospel to Armorica.

Prayer: Lord, protect those who travel and those who go far away to proclaim your name.

Act of the day: Pray for missionaries.

Day 5: The hermitage in the forest

Efflam built a hermitage in the forest along the coast. He lived there in prayer and poverty.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to seek you in silence and simplicity.

Act of the day: Turn off your screens for a while in order to pray.

Day 6: A spring for the king

To Arthur, exhausted by thirst, Efflam offered water from a spring that gushed out through his prayer. The saint served even the powerful, simply.

Prayer: Jesus, spring of living water, quench the thirst of those who long for you.

Act of the day: Do someone a service without asking whether they deserve it.

Day 7: The dragon overcome

Through his prayer, Efflam drove the dragon into the sea. This story speaks of Christ's victory over evil, a victory we do not win by our own strength alone.

Prayer: Lord, deliver me from evil and fear, and give me trust in your victory.

Act of the day: Entrust a specific fear to God, and pray for someone who is anxious.

Day 8: Enora, the faithful one

Enora joined Efflam in Armorica and lived in a nearby oratory. Each prayed separately, united by the same love of God.

Prayer: Lord, bless consecrated women and all those who serve you in secret.

Act of the day: Pray for a religious sister or a consecrated woman you know.

Day 9: Entering peace together

The legend says that Efflam and Enora died at the same moment. Those who have loved God together enter his peace together.

Prayer: Lord, through the intercession of Saint Efflam, 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, especially married couples.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Efflam,*
> *prince who became poor and hermit of the shore,*
> *present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *Keep me faithful to God's call*
> *and watch over our homes.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

PILGRIMAGE

Church of Saint-Efflam, Plestin-les-Grèves

The church of Saint-Efflam in Plestin-les-Grèves, in the Côtes-d'Armor, is the heart of the cult of Saint Efflam, a hermit who came from Ireland according to tradition and the patron of the parish. It keeps his tomb, on which he is shown lying, and it was here that bones recognized as his relics were found in 1819. Not far away, by the Lieue de Grève, the hamlet of Saint-Efflam has a chapel and a spring that recall the place where he is said to have landed.

A church reshaped over the centuries

The present church was built on the site of a 15th-century chapel, as an inscription in the porch attests, and it was altered and enlarged at several periods, up to the 20th century. It became so wide that it has five aisles. The bell tower shows early features, and the south porch, from the end of the Gothic period, is richly decorated. The building has been a listed historic monument since 1908.

On June 26, 1819, in the presence of the parish priest, the mayor and many witnesses, the saint's tomb was opened: under a flat stone, fragments of bones were found, which were recognized as the relics of Saint Efflam.

What you can see

The south porch houses statues of the twelve apostles, each with the instrument of his martyrdom or the sign of his mission, and a statue of Saint Ivo, works in kersantite stone by the 17th-century sculptor Roland Doré. Inside, the tomb of Saint Efflam, from the 15th or 16th century, probably replaced an older monument. Several statues of the saint adorn the church.

Near the beach, the chapel of Saint-Efflam and its spring form another place of memory. According to legend, it was there that Efflam made a spring gush out to quench the thirst of King Arthur. The great rock overlooking the beach and the bay itself are part of the landscape of his Life.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Efflam. Before his tomb, entrust to him married couples and families, young people seeking their vocation and the sick, then say the prayer to Saint Efflam. A walk to the chapel and the spring by the sea is a way to extend this pilgrimage. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Practical information

Plestin-les-Grèves lies in the Trégor, between Lannion and Morlaix. The hamlet of Saint-Efflam is on the bay, on the coast road that runs along the Lieue de Grève toward Saint-Michel-en-Grève. Church opening hours, Masses and celebrations in honor of the saint may vary: check with the parish or the tourist office before you come.

Credits and sources

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