BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Eugippius

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: January 15

IN BRIEF

Saint Eugippius

Monk and abbot of the 6th century near Naples, disciple and biographer of Saint Severinus of Noricum.

Feast day	January 15
Born	c. 465
Died	after 533, Castellum Lucullanum, near Naples (probably)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century

In this booklet

Life

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Novena to Saint Eugippius

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Eugippius

Saint Eugippius (Eugippe in French) was a monk and abbot of the late 5th and early 6th centuries. A disciple of Saint Severinus, the apostle of Noricum (on the Danube, in present-day Austria), he accompanied his relics to Italy and became abbot of the monastery founded near his tomb, at the *Castellum Lucullanum*, near Naples. He is best known as the author of the *Life of Saint Severinus*, written around 511. He died after 533, and his feast day is January 15.

Who was Saint Eugippius?

Eugippius belongs to the generation that saw the collapse of the Western Roman Empire. On the banks of the Danube, the Roman population then lived in fear of invasions. It was there that he met Saint Severinus, a monk who had come from the East and who supported the inhabitants through his prayer, his advice and his works of charity. Having become an abbot in Italy, Eugippius was also a man of learning, in contact with several great Christian writers of his time. We know little about his personal life: what we know comes mainly from his own writings and from letters addressed to him.

Key dates in the life of Eugippius

- **c. 465**: Born, perhaps in Campania, or more probably into a Roman family of the Danube provinces; historians hesitate.
- **c. 472-482**: He probably shares the last years of Saint Severinus, in Noricum, on the banks of the Danube.
- **January 8, 482**: Death of Saint Severinus, which Eugippius probably witnessed.

- **488**: The Romans of Noricum are evacuated to Italy; the monks exhume Severinus's body and take it with them. This is the first certain mention of Eugippius.
- **c. 492**: The relics of Severinus are laid to rest at the *Castellum Lucullanum*, near Naples, where a community of monks settles.
- **Early 6th century**: Eugippius is abbot of this monastery.
- **c. 511**: He writes the *Life of Saint Severinus* and sends it to the Roman deacon Paschasius.
- **After 533**: Death of Eugippius, who had still received a letter announcing the death of Saint Fulgentius of Ruspe.

The disciple of Saint Severinus

The origins of Eugippius are obscure. He has been said to have been born in Campania, but many historians think that he came rather from a Roman family of Noricum or Raetia, those Danube provinces that Rome could no longer protect. He joined Saint Severinus, probably in the last years of the saint's life. With him he discovered an austere monk who fasted and prayed, but who also organized the sharing of food, ransomed captives and negotiated with barbarian chiefs to protect the weakest.

Severinus died in 482. Six years later, King Odoacer ordered the Romans of Noricum to leave the region and settle in Italy. Before leaving, the monks opened the tomb of their father: the *Life of Saint Severinus* says that they found his body incorrupt. Eugippius was among those who carried it away. After several stages, the relics were received at the *Castellum Lucullanum*, the former villa of Lucullus by the sea, near Naples, on the site of the present Castel dell'Ovo. A monastery was established there, and Eugippius became its abbot.

The biographer and man of learning

Around 511, Eugippius put into writing the monks' memories of their founder. He sent his text to the Roman deacon Paschasius, asking him to polish it; Paschasius replied that there was nothing to add. This *Life of Saint Severinus* is a precious witness to the end of the Empire in the West: it describes with precision the towns of the Danube, the life of the inhabitants and the relations with the Germanic peoples. It is also the portrait of a saint who made charity a way of getting through crises.

Eugippius also compiled a vast collection of extracts from the works of Saint Augustine, much copied in the Middle Ages, which gave monks access to the thought of the bishop of Hippo. He was in contact with several figures of his time: the monk Dionysius Exiguus dedicated one of his translations to him, and Saint Fulgentius of Ruspe and the deacon Ferrandus of Carthage wrote to him. Cassiodorus, who had known him, mentions him with esteem. Finally, Isidore of Seville reports that he left a rule to his monks; some scholars think they have found it in an ancient manuscript, though this attribution is not unanimous.

Devotion and memory

Eugippius died after 533, on an unknown date. The location of his tomb is unknown, and his cult has remained discreet. He is honored as a saint, with a feast on January 15. His memory has lived on above all through his work: the *Life of Saint Severinus* made the apostle of Noricum known throughout Europe, and it is thanks to it that Austria and Bavaria still honor Severinus. No iconography specific to Eugippius is known: one can imagine him as a monk or abbot, with a book in his hand.

What can we learn from Saint Eugippius?

Eugippius is the saint of faithful memory. He knew how to keep and hand on the memory of his master, so much so that fifteen centuries later we still know Saint Severinus thanks to him. In a troubled age, he chose prayer, study and community life. You can pray to him for biographers, historians, copyists and all who hand on the memory of the saints, but also for refugees who must leave their land, like the Romans of Noricum.

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

Where to pray to Saint Eugippius

- **Naples** (Italy): the Castel dell'Ovo stands on the site of the ancient *Castellum Lucullanum*, where his monastery was.
- In any church, on January 15, his feast day, while reading a passage from the *Life of Saint Severinus*.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Eugippius to Keep the Memory of the Saints

Saint Eugippius, a disciple of Saint Severinus, accompanied the relics of his master from the Danube to Naples, and wrote his life so that his memory would not be lost. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him those who hand on the memory of the faith, religious communities and people forced to leave their land.

Prayer to Saint Eugippius

Saint Eugippius,
faithful disciple of Saint Severinus,
you learned from him prayer and charity
in the midst of a world that was collapsing.
Teach me to keep trusting in troubled times
and to serve the most fragile.

You carried the relics of your father along the roads of exile
and wrote his life so that he would be remembered.
Bless those who hand on the memory of the saints,
historians, writers, catechists,
and all who tell others of the wonders of God.

Watch over refugees and displaced families,
over the monks and nuns who pray for the world.
Help me to love the Word of God
and to meditate on it with the doctors of the Church.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Eugippius

- On his feast day, January 15.
- For biographers, historians, translators and all who write about the faith.
- For refugees, exiles and those who must leave their country.
- For religious communities and their faithfulness to the charism of their founders.
- Before reading a spiritual text or the life of a saint.

A short invocation

> *Lord, keep alive in us the memory of your saints.*
> *Saint Eugippius, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Eugippius from January 7 to 15, and read the life of Saint Eugippius.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Eugippius

This novena spends nine days with Saint Eugippius, a monk and abbot of the 6th century, disciple of Saint Severinus and author of his life. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, January 15, begin on January 7. 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 Eugippius, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: Uncertain origins

We know almost nothing of Eugippius's childhood. Yet God knows each person by name, even those whose story history has not kept.

Prayer: Lord, you have always known me. Teach me to seek your gaze more than the gaze of others.

Act of the day: Do a discreet service, without trying to be noticed.

Day 2: Meeting a master

Eugippius joined Saint Severinus on the banks of the Danube. He discovered a man of prayer who shared bread, ransomed captives and protected the weak.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the witnesses who have shown me your face. Help me to follow their example.

Act of the day: Pray for someone who has mattered in your life of faith.

Day 3: Faith in a collapsing world

In Noricum, the Roman Empire no longer protected anyone. Severinus and his monks stayed, prayed and supported the frightened inhabitants.

Prayer: Lord, when everything seems to waver, keep me in trust. Make me a support for others.

Act of the day: Call or visit someone who is anxious or alone.

Day 4: The death of the master

Severinus died in 482, surrounded by his monks. Eugippius probably witnessed this peaceful departure.

Prayer: Lord, welcome into your peace those I have loved and who have gone before me.

Act of the day: Pray for a departed person who handed on something precious to you.

Day 5: On the roads of exile

In 488, the Romans of Noricum had to leave for Italy. The monks took the body of Severinus with them. Eugippius knew exile and the road.

Prayer: Lord, watch over refugees and displaced families. Open our hearts to welcome them.

Act of the day: Support, with a gift or a service, a work that welcomes refugees.

Day 6: A new house of prayer

Near Naples, by the sea, the monks settled around the relics of Severinus. Eugippius became abbot there and guided his brothers.

Prayer: Lord, bless abbots, superiors and all who are responsible for a community.

Act of the day: Pray for your parish priest or for the leader of a community you know.

Day 7: Writing in order to remember

Around 511, Eugippius wrote down the life of Severinus. Thanks to him, the memory of a saint has crossed the centuries.

Prayer: Lord, keep me from forgetting your blessings. Teach me to tell what you have done for me.

Act of the day: Read the life of a saint, or tell a child the story of a witness of the faith.

Day 8: Nourished by the Fathers of the Church

Eugippius gathered extracts from the works of Saint Augustine for his monks. He knew that prayer is nourished by the thought of the great doctors.

Prayer: Lord, give me a taste for study and spiritual reading, so that I may know you better and love you more.

Act of the day: Read a page from a Father of the Church or from the Catechism.

Day 9: A life given to the end

Eugippius died after 533, in his monastery. He lived faithfully, in prayer, study and the service of his brothers.

Prayer: Lord, grant that I may remain faithful to you to the end. Through the intercession of Saint Eugippius, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass and entrust your intention to God.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Eugippius,*
> *disciple of Saint Severinus and keeper of his memory,*
> *you went through exile in faith*
> *and served your brothers in prayer and study.*
> *Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *Keep me faithful to the witnesses who have gone before me*
> *and attentive to those who seek refuge.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

Credits and sources

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