BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Friard

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: August 1

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IN BRIEF

Saint Friard

6th-century farmer who became a hermit on an island in the Loire, patron of Indre near Nantes.

Feast day	August 1
Born	c. 510, Besné (Loire-Atlantique), according to tradition
Died	between 573 and 583, island of Vindunitta, in the Loire (Indret, according to tradition)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century
Patron saint of	Farmers, Parish of Indre (Loire-Atlantique)

In this booklet

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Novena to Saint Friard

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Friard

Saint Friard was a 6th-century hermit, born around 510 in the region of Nantes, at Besné according to tradition. A farmer who became a recluse, he lived in prayer and penance on an island in the Loire, under the protection of Bishop Saint Felix of Nantes, with his companion Secundellus. Gregory of Tours devotes a chapter of his *Life of the Fathers* to him. His feast day is August 1.

Who was Saint Friard?

Friard belongs to those solitaries of Merovingian Gaul who sought God far from the noise of the towns. He founded no great monastery and never became a bishop: he worked the land, prayed and did penance. We know him mainly through Gregory of Tours, who wrote at the end of the 6th century, shortly after his death, and counted him among the "Fathers" whose lives should edify the faithful. The details of his biography remain few, however, and the dates given vary from one source to another.

Key dates in the life of Friard

- **c. 510**: Born into a family of farmers, at Besné according to tradition, north of the Loire estuary.
- **530s-550s**: He works the land and leads a fervent Christian life among his own people.
- **c. 549**: Felix becomes bishop of Nantes; Friard will live as a recluse under his protection.
- **c. 560**: He withdraws to the island of *Vindunitta*, in the Loire, to live in solitude.

- **Shortly after**: A man of Nantes named Secundellus joins him and shares his life of prayer and penance.
- **Between 573 and 583**: Friard dies on his island; tradition often places his death around 577.
- **Late 6th century**: Gregory of Tours tells his life in the *Life of the Fathers*.

A farmer who sought God

Friard grew up in a peasant family. According to tradition, working the land spoke to him of his inner life: just as a field must be ploughed, sown and weeded, his soul was a piece of ground God had entrusted to him, to be tended with patience. This simple image explains why he remained dear to country people and was honored as a patron of farmers.

In his mature years, he chose a more radical life. He left his family and withdrew to an island in the Loire that Gregory of Tours calls *Vindunitta*. Its exact location is debated: some place it at the mouth of the estuary, others very close to Nantes. Local tradition connects it with Indret, today in the commune of Indre, where the parish still bears the names of Friard and Secundellus.

His companion Secundellus

Friard did not stay alone. A man of Nantes named Secundellus, whom Gregory presents as a deacon, came to share his life. The two lived poorly, in prayer, fasting and work. Gregory tells that Secundellus was tempted by the devil, who appeared to him under a false appearance of holiness to push him toward pride in working miracles. Friard helped him recognize the trap and return to humility. The story aims to show that true holiness does not seek brilliance, but truth of heart.

The two hermits lived under the protection of Saint Felix, bishop of Nantes, a great pastor of the city at that time. This link with the bishop shows that the life of recluses was not an isolated adventure: it was part of the local Church,

which recognized and supported it.

Death and devotion

Friard died on his island, between 573 and 583 according to the sources. Gregory of Tours surrounds his death with signs showing his holiness. Like many saints of that era, he was honored without any canonization process: it was the veneration of the people, recognized by the local Church, that made him a saint. His cult, of immemorial tradition, is attested on August 1, the date kept by the Roman Martyrology.

Friard and Secundellus have remained the patrons of the parish of Indre, west of Nantes. Their memory is linked with that of Saint Hermeland, another monk of the same region, who a little later founded a monastery on a neighboring island in the Loire.

What can we learn from Saint Friard?

Friard reminds us that holiness can grow out of the most ordinary work. The farmer understood that his heart, too, needed to be cultivated. He then left everything for prayer, without seeking prestige. You can pray to him for farmers and people of the land, for those who seek silence, and to learn to recognize false lights, as he did for his companion.

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

Where to pray to Saint Friard

- **Indre** (Loire-Atlantique): the parish that bears the names of Saints Friard and Secundellus, on the banks of the Loire.
- **Besné** (Loire-Atlantique): the place where tradition locates his birth.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Friard for People of the Land

Saint Friard, a farmer who became a hermit on an island in the Loire in the 6th century, sought God in work, silence and penance. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him people of the land, those who seek silence and those who need discernment.

Prayer to Saint Friard

Saint Friard,
you who ploughed the land of your fathers
and understood that your soul was a field entrusted by God,
teach me to tend my heart with patience,
to pull up what chokes it
and to let the Word grow there.

You left the noise of the world
for an island in the river,
where you prayed day and night.
Give me a taste for silence
and faithfulness in prayer.

You who helped your brother Secundellus
to recognize the snares of pride,
keep me in humility and truth.
Bless farmers and their families,
and all who live from the work of the land.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Friard

- On his feast day, August 1, in the middle of harvest time.
- For farmers, breeders and all people of the land.
- Before sowing or harvesting, to entrust the work of the fields.
- When you want to make silence in order to pray better.
- When you need discernment in the face of temptation.

A prayer for the harvest

> *Lord of the harvest,*
> *bless the work of those who cultivate the land.*
> *Saint Friard, pray for them. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Friard from July 24 to August 1, and read the life of Saint Friard.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Friard

This novena offers nine days of prayer with Saint Friard, a farmer who became a hermit on an island in the Loire in the 6th century. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. To finish it on his feast day, August 1, begin on July 24. 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 Friard, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely. The episodes mentioned come from Gregory of Tours and local tradition.

Day 1: A family of farmers

Friard was born into a peasant family in the region of Nantes. He received the faith in the midst of daily work, to the rhythm of the seasons.

Prayer: Lord, bless the families who live from the land, and make our homes places where faith is simply handed on.

Act of the day: Before your meal, thank God for those who produced your food.

Day 2: The soul as a field

According to tradition, working the fields reminded Friard that his soul was ground entrusted by God, to be ploughed and sown.

Prayer: Lord, plough my heart, and make your Word sprout there like good seed.

Act of the day: Read slowly the parable of the sower (Matthew 13).

Day 3: Pulling up the weeds

A farmer knows that weeds must be pulled for the grain to grow. Friard learned to fight within himself what was choking the love of God.

Prayer: Lord, show me what clutters my heart, and give me the strength to let it go.

Act of the day: Make an examination of conscience and, if possible, prepare for confession.

Day 4: Leaving everything

In his mature years, Friard left his family and his fields to live in solitude, on an island in the Loire.

Prayer: Lord, give me a free heart, ready to leave what keeps me from following you.

Act of the day: Give up an unnecessary habit today.

Day 5: The silence of the island

On his island, Friard lived far from noise. The flowing river surrounded him with silence and invited him to continual prayer.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to keep silence, so that I may hear your voice.

Act of the day: Take ten minutes of complete silence, without screens or noise.

Day 6: A brother for the road

Secundellus, a man of Nantes, came to join Friard. The two men shared prayer, work and poverty.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the friends who help me walk toward you. Make me a good companion for others.

Act of the day: Pray for a friend in the faith, or write them a note.

Day 7: Unmasking false lights

Gregory of Tours tells that Secundellus was tempted by a false appearance of holiness that pushed him toward pride. Friard helped him recognize the trap.

Prayer: Lord, give me the spirit of discernment, and keep me from seeking the admiration of others.

Act of the day: Do a good deed in secret, without telling anyone.

Day 8: Within the Church of Nantes

Friard lived under the protection of Saint Felix, bishop of Nantes. His solitude remained rooted in the Church.

Prayer: Lord, bless our bishop and our priests, and keep me united to your Church.

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

Day 9: The harvest of a life

Friard died on his island, after a life of prayer and penance. The grain sown in the earth bore its fruit.

Prayer: Lord, grant that I may bear fruit for you. Through the intercession of Saint Friard, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass, or pray for farmers during the harvest.

Closing prayer

Saint Friard,
tiller of the land and of souls,
hermit of the Loire,
you sought God in silence and humility.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Bless the people of the land,
and keep me faithful in prayer.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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