BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Fulrad

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: February 17

IN BRIEF

Saint Fulrad

8th-century abbot of Saint-Denis, chaplain to the Carolingian kings and founder of priories in Alsace.

Feast day	February 17, July 16
Born	c. 710, probably southern Austrasia (the Seille region)
Died	July 16, 784, abbey of Saint-Denis (probable)
Canonized	ancient local cult (Lièpvre)
Era	8th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Fulrad for Those Who Serve and Those Who Govern

Novena to Saint Fulrad, Abbot of Saint-Denis

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Fulrad

Saint Fulrad (also spelled Fulrade) was a Frankish monk of the 8th century, abbot of Saint-Denis from about 749-750 until his death on July 16, 784. Chaplain to the Carolingian kings Pepin the Short, Carloman and Charlemagne, and a trusted envoy of several popes, he also founded priories in Alsace, Lorraine and Alemannia. He was long honored as a saint at Lièpvre, in Alsace, where his memory was kept on February 17.

Who was Saint Fulrad?

Fulrad is one of the great, yet little-known, figures of the birth of Carolingian Europe. Born into a wealthy Frankish family, he was at once a monk, abbot of one of the most prestigious abbeys of the kingdom, counselor to kings and diplomat to the pope. His name is linked to the events that brought the Carolingians to the throne and gave the papacy temporal power in Italy. But he was also a builder of monasteries and a man of the Church, whom Alsatian tradition venerated as a saint. No early Life of him survives: what we know comes mainly from charters, papal letters, the Frankish annals and his will.

Key dates in the life of Fulrad

- **c. 710**: Born into a Frankish family, probably in southern Austrasia (the Seille region); his parents are named Riculf and Ermengard.
- **749-750**: He becomes abbot of Saint-Denis, succeeding Abbot Amalbert.
- **c. 750**: With Burchard of Würzburg, he is sent by Pepin to Pope Zachary to consult him about the Frankish kingship.
- **754**: Pope Stephen II stays at the abbey of Saint-Denis, where he anoints Pepin and his sons.

- **c. 755-756**: On Pepin's behalf, he hands over to the pope the cities of the Exarchate of Ravenna and the Pentapolis.
- **760s**: He founds in Alsace the priory that will become Saint-Hippolyte, where he places relics of the Roman martyr Hippolytus.
- **774**: Charlemagne confirms the foundation of the monastery of Lièpvre, in the Alsatian Vosges.
- **777**: At Herstal, he draws up his will and leaves his property and foundations to the abbey of Saint-Denis.
- **July 16, 784**: He dies; his body is buried at Saint-Denis, then later moved to Lièpvre.
- **Late 17th century**: The Benedictine scholar Jean Mabillon still notes his cult at Lièpvre, on February 17.

A monk in the service of the Church and the kingdom

The young Fulrad grew up in a family close to the Pippinids, the ancestors of Charlemagne. The necrology of Argenteuil calls him "a monk of our congregation," which suggests that he was first a monk at Saint-Denis before being elected its abbot, around 749-750. He became a friend of Saint Boniface, the apostle of Germany, who was then working to reform the Frankish Church.

Pepin the Short, mayor of the palace and later king, made him his chaplain: Fulrad directed the palace chapel and the clerics attached to the court. He kept this office under Carloman, then under Charlemagne. The kings entrusted him with the most delicate missions. Around 750, he went to Rome with Bishop Burchard of Würzburg to ask Pope Zachary for his opinion on the kingship: according to the Frankish annals, the pope answered that it was better to call king the one who actually held power. Shortly afterwards, Pepin became king.

The friend of popes

When Pope Stephen II, threatened by the Lombards, came to seek help from the Franks, he spent the winter of 753-754 at Saint-Denis with Fulrad. In the summer of 754, he anointed Pepin and his two sons there. Fulrad then accompanied the pope to Italy. After Pepin's campaigns against the Lombards, he was the one charged with receiving the keys of the cities restored to the pope and, according to tradition, laying them on the tomb of Saint Peter. Popes Stephen II, Paul I and Adrian I granted him several privileges, in particular the right to found monasteries placed under the direct protection of the Holy See. In one of his letters, Stephen II called him "a man beloved of God."

A founder of monasteries

As head of Saint-Denis, Fulrad recovered many properties that had been taken from the abbey and undertook the rebuilding of its church. Above all, on his family's lands and on those given to him by the kings, he founded a series of priories: Saint-Hippolyte and Lièpvre in Alsace, Salonnes in Lorraine, and several houses in Alemannia, such as Herbrechtingen and Esslingen. He placed in them relics brought from Rome, those of Saint Hippolytus and of a Saint Alexander, as well as those of Saint Cucuphas, a martyr of Barcelona. In 777, in his will drawn up at Herstal, he gave everything he owned to the abbey of Saint-Denis. A phrase later inscribed on his images sums up the spirit of this gift: "Here I give all my goods to God."

His death and his cult

Fulrad died on July 16, 784, according to the necrology of Saint-Denis. Alcuin, the great scholar of Charlemagne's court, wrote his epitaph and described him as the most illustrious of the abbots of Saint-Denis, loved by several popes and three kings. His body, first buried at Saint-Denis, was moved at an unknown date to the priory of Lièpvre, where he was long venerated as a saint. A popular

cult was celebrated there every year on February 17; Mabillon still observed it at the end of the 17th century. According to local tradition, his tomb was plundered in 1445, during the troubles linked to the Armagnacs. Some calendars also keep July 16, the day of his death.

He is depicted as an abbot, with miter and crozier, sometimes holding a charter that recalls his will. Stained glass windows from 1911 show him in the churches of Lièpvre and Saint-Hippolyte, where a fresco also portrays him receiving the relics of Saint Hippolytus from the pope. A statue of him stands in the abbey church of Ebersmunster, and another was erected at Lièpvre in 1963.

What can we learn from Saint Fulrad?

Fulrad shows that a person can serve God in the very heart of worldly affairs. A monk, he lived at court, negotiated with kings and popes, and managed immense estates. But he placed this power at the service of the Church and of monastic life, founding houses of prayer, and in the end he gave everything away. We can pray to him for those who hold public responsibilities, for diplomats and for all who manage goods in the service of others.

Where to pray to Saint Fulrad

- **Lièpvre** (Haut-Rhin, France): the church, where a stained glass window depicts him, and the statue at the entrance of the village; his relics were venerated here.
- **Saint-Hippolyte** (Haut-Rhin): the church, with its stained glass window and fresco.
- **Saint-Denis** (north of Paris): the basilica, heir to the abbey he governed for more than thirty years.
- **Ebersmunster** (Bas-Rhin): the abbey church, where his statue stands.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Fulrad for Those Who Serve and Those Who Govern

Saint Fulrad, abbot of Saint-Denis in the 8th century, served kings and popes without ever ceasing to be a monk, and in the end he left all his goods to God. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him those who hold responsibilities, those who manage goods, and those who seek to serve God in the midst of worldly affairs.

Prayer to Saint Fulrad

Saint Fulrad,
monk of Saint-Denis and servant of kings,
you carried peace between the powerful
and sought the good of the Church.
Teach me to serve loyally
wherever a task has been entrusted to me.

You who built houses of prayer
at the foot of the mountains of Alsace,
help me to make my life
a place where God is sought and loved.

You who said, "Here I give all my goods to God,"
free my heart from attachment to riches.
Watch over those who govern and negotiate,
over those who manage the goods of others,
and obtain for us the grace to be faithful stewards.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Fulrad

- On February 17, the day his memory was kept at Lièpvre, or on July 16, the anniversary of his death.
- For political leaders, diplomats and those who work for peace.
- For those who manage goods, businesses or charitable works in the service of others.
- For the monasteries and religious communities of Alsace and Lorraine.
- When drawing up a will or making a significant gift.

A short invocation

> *Lord, everything comes from you and everything returns to you.*
> *Saint Fulrad, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Fulrad from February 9 to 17, and discover the life of Saint Fulrad.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Fulrad, Abbot of Saint-Denis

Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is inspired by the life of Saint Fulrad, abbot of Saint-Denis and founder of priories in Alsace. To finish it on February 17, the day his memory was kept at Lièpvre, begin on February 9. You can also pray it from July 8 to 16, for the anniversary of his death, or 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 Fulrad, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A family and an inheritance

Fulrad was born into a wealthy and influential Frankish family. He received a great deal: an education, property, connections. All his life, he asked himself how to put this inheritance at the service of God.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for all I have received. Teach me to make it bear fruit for you and for others.

Act of the day: List three gifts you have received from your family, and thank God for them.

Day 2: A monk above all

Before becoming abbot, Fulrad was probably a monk at Saint-Denis. Common prayer and obedience were the foundation of everything he did afterwards.

Prayer: Lord, may prayer be the foundation of my day and of my commitments.

Act of the day: Take ten minutes of silent prayer before starting your work.

Day 3: The friendship of the saints

Fulrad was a friend of Saint Boniface, the apostle of Germany. Saints support and encourage one another: no one walks alone towards God.

Prayer: Lord, give me friends who lead me to you, and make me a faithful friend.

Act of the day: Write to or call a friend in the faith to encourage them.

Day 4: Serving loyally

Chaplain to Pepin the Short, then to Carloman and Charlemagne, Fulrad served three kings. He carried out the missions entrusted to him with wisdom and perseverance.

Prayer: Lord, make me loyal in my work and faithful to those who rely on me.

Act of the day: Carefully complete a task you have been putting off for a long time.

Day 5: Welcoming the successor of Peter

In 754, Pope Stephen II spent the winter at Saint-Denis with Fulrad. The abbot welcomed and accompanied the shepherd of the universal Church at a difficult time.

Prayer: Lord, bless our pope and all the bishops. Keep your Church in unity.

Act of the day: Pray a decade of the rosary for the pope.

Day 6: A peacemaker

As a diplomat, Fulrad traveled several times to Rome and negotiated between the Frankish kings and the popes. He sought to serve peace and the good of the Church.

Prayer: Lord, make me a peacemaker in my family, my work and my town.

Act of the day: Take a step towards someone with whom you disagree.

Day 7: Building houses of prayer

At Saint-Hippolyte, at Lièpvre and elsewhere, Fulrad founded priories. He placed there relics of martyrs, so that monks might pray in their memory.

Prayer: Lord, bless the monasteries and all the places where you are prayed to day and night.

Act of the day: Visit a nearby church or chapel and pray there for a few minutes.

Day 8: Giving everything to God

In 777, Fulrad left all his property to the abbey of Saint-Denis. "Here I give all my goods to God": these words sum up his life.

Prayer: Lord, free me from attachment to riches. Teach me to give with joy.

Act of the day: Make a gift to a Church work or to a person in need.

Day 9: A peaceful death and a faithful memory

Fulrad died on July 16, 784. At Lièpvre, his relics were venerated for a long time. His memory reminds us that faithfulness in small and great things bears fruit far beyond a single life.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to live and die in your peace. Through the intercession of Saint Fulrad, grant me the grace I ask of you in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Pray for the deceased of your family and, if possible, attend Mass.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Fulrad,*
> *abbot of Saint-Denis and founder of monasteries,*
> *you served kings and popes*
> *without ever forgetting that everything belongs to God.*
> *Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *Help me to be a faithful and generous servant.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

Credits and sources

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