

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Gangulphus (Gangolf)

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: May 11

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IN BRIEF

Saint Gangulphus (Gangolf)

Burgundian nobleman betrayed by his wife and killed near Avallon, venerated as a martyr and patron of spouses in troubled marriages.

Feast day	May 11
Born	early 8th century, Varennes-sur-Amance, France
Died	May 11, 760, near Avallon, France
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	8th century
Patron saint of	troubled marriages, betrayed husbands, glovemakers, shoemakers, tanners, hunters

In this booklet

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Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Gangulphus (Gangolf)

Saint Gangulphus, also known as Gangolf, Gengulphus or, in French, Gengoul, was a Burgundian nobleman of the eighth century from Varennes-sur-Amance, near Langres, in eastern France. According to tradition, betrayed by his unfaithful wife, he withdrew to an estate near Avallon, where he was killed by her lover in 760. Venerated as a martyr, he became the patron saint of spouses in troubled marriages. His cult spread from Burgundy to Lorraine, Belgium, Switzerland and Germany. His feast day is May 11.

Who was Saint Gangulphus?

Gangulphus, in Latin *Gangulfus* or *Gengulfus*, bears a Germanic name in which the word "wolf" can be recognized. His life is known mainly through a Latin *Life* written more than a century after his death and later embellished by tradition. In the tenth century, the famous Saxon poet Hrotsvitha of Gandersheim even devoted a poem to him. Historians, however, have very few contemporary documents.

His story should therefore be read as a pious tradition, whose core seems to be this: a Christian lord, known for his uprightness and generosity, was murdered following a marital tragedy and was immediately venerated as a saint.

He is honored as a "martyr," not because he died for refusing to deny the faith, but because his unjust death, accepted without hatred, was understood as a witness of Christian faithfulness. The Roman Martyrology mentions him on May 11.

Key dates

- **Early 8th century**: Born at Varennes-sur-Amance, near Langres, into a family of great landowners, according to tradition (the year 702 is

sometimes given).

- **Mid-8th century**: Serves in the Frankish armies, in the time of Pepin the Short, and is noted for his bravery and piety.
- **Around the age of twenty**: Marries a woman of high rank, named Ganea by tradition.
- **750s**: Discovering his wife's infidelity, he withdraws to his lands near Avallon.
- **May 11, 760**: Killed at night by his wife's lover.
- **After 760**: His body is brought back to Varennes, where a pilgrimage begins.
- **c. 970**: Bishop Gerard of Toul obtains part of his relics and founds the church of Saint-Gengoult in Toul.

A just and generous lord

According to his *Life*, Gangulphus grew up in a wealthy family in the region of Langres. From an early age he stood out for his piety and honesty, and he gave alms generously. His parents intended him for a military career. Having become an important lord of the kingdom, he fought in the Frankish armies without losing, the story says, his life of prayer in the midst of the camps. When his parents died, he managed his great estates wisely, for the benefit of the poor rather than his own comfort.

The spring and the trial

Tradition says that during a journey, Gangulphus bought a spring in the Bassigny region. His servants were surprised, because it was very far from his home. Back in Varennes, he planted his staff in the ground: a spring gushed out, while the other one dried up. This is why he is often shown with a staff, near a fountain.

Married at around twenty, Gangulphus gradually discovered that his wife was unfaithful. The story says that he did not want to condemn her without proof, and suggested that she plunge her arm into the water of the spring: she drew it out burned, or stripped of its skin according to other versions. Gangulphus did not take revenge. He forgave, left her part of his property and withdrew to an estate he owned near Avallon, to live there in prayer and austerity.

The death of a just man

One night, his wife's lover, a cleric according to tradition, broke into his house and struck him with a sword. Mortally wounded, Gangulphus had time to receive the last sacraments. He died on May 11, 760. The story adds that the guilty parties also came to a swift end. The saint's body was brought back to Varennes with great ceremony, amid miracles, and the monastery of Varennes became the first guardian of his relics.



The collegiate church of Saint-Gengoult in Toul, founded to house his relics.

A European cult

The relics of Saint Gangulphus were shared out as early as the early Middle Ages. Around 970, Bishop Saint Gerard of Toul obtained part of them and founded a church and a chapter in his honor, the origin of the collegiate church of Saint-Gengoult in Toul. Other relics went to the cathedral of Langres and to many churches. His cult then spread widely: dozens of churches are dedicated to him in Lorraine, Burgundy, Franche-Comté, Belgium (notably Florennes and Liège), Switzerland and Germany, for example in Trier. Towns bear his name, such as Saint-Gengoux-le-National in Burgundy or Saint-Gingolph, on Lake Geneva.

Why is Saint Gangulphus the patron saint of troubled marriages?

Because of his own story, he is invoked in difficult marital situations and is considered the patron saint of husbands whose wives have been unfaithful. Glovemakers, shoemakers, tanners and hunters also chose him as their patron. Many fountains placed under his name were visited for healing from various illnesses and for the protection of herds.

Gangulphus is the saint of marital wounds. Betrayed, he did not answer with violence. He forgave, he withdrew and he entrusted his cause to God. Without idealizing his legend, we can see in him a companion for those who suffer from betrayal, separation or an unhappy marriage. We can pray to him for couples in crisis, for people who have been deceived or abandoned, and for the grace of forgiveness.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Gangulphus in art

Saint Gangulphus is usually shown as a knight or nobleman, sometimes holding a sword, and often with a staff near a spring or fountain, recalling the miracle of the spring at Varennes.

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

Where to pray to Saint Gangulphus

- **Toul** (Meurthe-et-Moselle, France): the collegiate church of Saint-Gengoult, founded for his relics.
- **Varennes-sur-Amance** (Haute-Marne, France): the church and the chapel of Saint-Gengoulf, in the saint's homeland.
- **Langres** (Haute-Marne, France): the cathedral of Saint-Mammès, which received part of his relics.
- **Florennes** (Belgium): the collegiate church of Saint-Gangulphe.
- **Trier** (Germany): the church of Saint Gangolf, on the market square.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Gangulphus for Troubled Marriages

Saint Gangulphus, also called Gangolf or Gengoul, has been invoked since the Middle Ages in the difficulties of marriage. Betrayed by his wife, he refused revenge, forgave and entrusted his cause to God. No ancient prayer to him is reliable enough to be quoted here with its source, so Saintspedia offers an original prayer, inspired by his story and by the intentions for which he is invoked.

Prayer to Saint Gangulphus for troubled marriages

Saint Gangulphus, you knew the pain of betrayal in your own home: I come to you with my wounds.

You did not answer evil with revenge: teach me to refuse hatred, even when I have been deceived, humiliated or abandoned.

You forgave and entrusted your cause to God: obtain for me the grace of forgiveness, which sets the heart free, and the wisdom to know what I must do.

Watch over couples in crisis: may they find the path of dialogue, truth and reconciliation. Support spouses who suffer alone, people who are separated, and children who carry the weight of broken families.

You made a spring rise up for your people: make the spring of peace and faithfulness rise up in us. I entrust to you this intention: (name it in silence).

Through your intercession, may the Lord heal what is wounded in our families and keep us in his love. Amen.

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia, free to use for personal and community prayer.

Short invocation

Saint Gangulphus, patron of spouses in trial, pray for us and for our families. Amen.

When to pray this prayer

Saint Gangulphus is celebrated on May 11, the anniversary of his death near Avallon in 760. You can pray to him during a marital crisis, after a betrayal, at the time of a separation, or to prepare for a difficult act of forgiveness. You can also pray the novena to Saint Gangulphus from May 3 to May 11.

Praying to a saint does not replace the help that may be needed in a painful situation: a priest, a counselor, a trusted friend or, where there is danger, the protection of the law. Saint Gangulphus walks with you on that path; he does not ask you to stay silent about harm done to you.

To discover his story, read the life of Saint Gangulphus.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Gangulphus

This novena to Saint Gangulphus (Gangolf) is an original composition by Saintspedia. Over nine days, it follows the story told by tradition: a just and generous lord, betrayed by his wife, who forgave, withdrew to pray and died a violent death near Avallon in 760. To end on May 11, his feast day, begin it on May 3. You can also pray it at any time, for a marriage in crisis, after a betrayal or a separation, or when you are struggling to forgive.

How to pray this novena

Each day, take a few quiet minutes. Begin with the Sign of the Cross, read the meditation, then say the prayer of the day, followed by an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. End with the small act proposed. If the wound you carry is deep, go gently: a novena is not a test of strength but a way of letting God come close.

Day 1: A just man

From his youth, Gangulphus was known for his piety and honesty. Tradition remembers him as upright and generous. Holiness begins with simple faithfulness in everyday life.

Prayer: Saint Gangulphus, help me to be honest and upright in all I do, even when no one sees. Amen.

Today: Keep your word in a small matter where it would be easy not to.

Day 2: Wealth shared with the poor

When he inherited great estates, Gangulphus used them for the poor more than for his own comfort. What we receive is given to us to be shared.

Prayer: Saint Gangulphus, free my heart from attachment to possessions, and make me generous toward those in need. Amen.

Today: Give something to a person or a work that helps the poor.

Day 3: Prayer in the midst of noise

Even as a soldier in the Frankish armies, the story says, Gangulphus did not abandon prayer. In the busiest places, it is still possible to keep a heart turned toward God.

Prayer: Saint Gangulphus, help me to keep a moment of prayer even in my busiest days. Amen.

Today: Stop three times during the day to say a short prayer.

Day 4: The gift of marriage

Gangulphus married at about twenty. Marriage is a great gift and a great responsibility, a covenant that needs care, patience and prayer to grow.

Prayer: Saint Gangulphus, bless all married couples, especially those I know, and help them to renew their love each day. Amen.

Today: Pray by name for a married couple, perhaps your own parents or friends.

Day 5: The wound of betrayal

Gangulphus discovered that his wife was unfaithful. Betrayal by the one closest to us is among the deepest wounds a person can suffer. God does not look away from this pain. Jesus himself was betrayed by a friend who shared his table; he knows from within what it means to be wounded by someone you trusted.

Prayer: Saint Gangulphus, I entrust to you all who have been betrayed or deceived. Console them and keep them from despair. Amen.

Today: Bring a wound you carry before God in silence, without hiding anything.

Day 6: Refusing revenge

Gangulphus did not want to condemn without proof, and once the truth was known, he did not take revenge. Refusing violence is not weakness; it is a choice not to let evil have the last word.

Prayer: Saint Gangulphus, when I am hurt, keep me from words and acts of revenge. Amen.

Today: Hold back a harsh word, and pray for someone who has hurt you.

Day 7: Forgiving and stepping back

Gangulphus forgave, left his wife part of his property and withdrew to an estate near Avallon to pray. Forgiveness does not always mean pretending nothing happened; sometimes it goes together with a wise distance. It is a road, often a long one, and it begins with the simple desire to be freed from hatred. God does not ask us to feel what we cannot yet feel; he asks us to let him work.

Prayer: Saint Gangulphus, obtain for me the grace of forgiveness and the wisdom to know what I must do. Amen.

Today: Ask God for the grace to forgive one specific person, even if you are not ready yet.

Day 8: A spring in the desert

Tradition says Gangulphus planted his staff in the ground and a spring rose up. In our dry and wounded places, God can make new life spring up.

Prayer: Saint Gangulphus, make the spring of peace and faithfulness rise up in our families. Amen.

Today: Bless yourself with holy water, or pray for a family going through a hard time.

Day 9: A death without hatred

Gangulphus was struck down at night in his own house. He had time to receive the last sacraments, and he died on May 11, 760. His unjust death, accepted without hatred, was seen as a witness of Christian faithfulness.

Prayer: Saint Gangulphus, help me to place my whole life, with its wounds, in the hands of God. Amen.

Today: Pray for people who are victims of violence in their own homes.

Closing prayer

Saint Gangulphus, just man, generous lord and faithful witness, you knew betrayal in your own home and you answered with forgiveness rather than revenge. At the end of this novena, I entrust to you all couples in crisis, all who have been deceived or abandoned, all who are separated, and the children who suffer from broken families. Obtain for us the grace of truth, the courage of forgiveness and the healing of what is wounded. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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