BOOKLET TO PRINT

# Saint Getulius

*Life, prayer and novena*

Feast day: June 10

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IN BRIEF

## Saint Getulius

*Converted Roman officer, husband of Saint Symphorosa, martyr in the 2nd century according to tradition.*

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| **Feast day** | June 10 |
| **Died** | 2nd century, under Hadrian according to tradition, Sabina, near Tivoli (Italy) |
| **Canonized** | immemorial cult |
| **Era** | 2nd century |

## In this booklet


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Novena to Saint Getulius

Credits and sources



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LIFE

# Saint Getulius

According to tradition, Saint Getulius was a Roman officer who became a Christian, the husband of Saint Symphorosa and the father of seven sons, martyred in Sabina, near Tivoli, under Emperor Hadrian in the 2nd century. With him, tradition honors Caerealis, who came to arrest him and was converted by him, as well as Amantius and Primitivus. His feast day is June 10.

## Who was Saint Getulius?

Getulius belongs to those martyrs of the early centuries whose existence and cult are attested, but whose life has come down to us through a late account, a *Passion* written long after the events and largely legendary. According to this account, he was an officer in the Roman army. Converted to Christ, he left the emperor's service and withdrew to his estates in Sabina, northeast of Rome, where he gathered a small community of Christians around him. He is presented as the husband of Saint Symphorosa of Tivoli, herself a martyr with her seven sons. These details should be read with caution: above all, they show how the early Church kept the memory of a family that remained faithful even to martyrdom.

## Key dates

- **Early 2nd century**: An officer in the Roman army, he converts to Christianity, according to his Passion.
- **Reign of Hadrian (117-138)**: Retired to Sabina, he leads a small Christian community.
- **Reign of Hadrian**: Caerealis, sent to arrest him, is converted through contact with him.

- **c. 120-130**: Getulius, Caerealis, Amantius and Primitivus are put to death, according to tradition.
- **Shortly after**: According to tradition, his wife Symphorosa and their seven sons are martyred in turn at Tivoli.

## An officer won over by Christ

The Passion of Saint Getulius says that he served in the imperial army. Like other soldiers of the early centuries, he discovered Christ and chose to give him his whole life. He gave up his career and went back to his lands in Sabina to live his faith. His house became a place of prayer, where Christians of the region gathered.

The account dwells on one episode: Emperor Hadrian sent an officer of the court, Caerealis, to arrest him. But through his contact with Getulius, Caerealis was touched by the Christian faith and asked for baptism. The persecutor became a brother. This is a frequent theme in the stories of the martyrs, and it carries a simple message: the witness of a Christian can change the heart of the one who comes to condemn him.

## Martyrdom in Sabina

Arrested, Getulius, his brother Amantius, Caerealis and Primitivus were tried and condemned. According to the Passion, they were thrown into a fire that the flames did not harm, then put to death by the sword. The account dates these events to the reign of Hadrian, in the early 2nd century. Historians cannot verify these details, but the cult of these martyrs in Sabina is ancient.

Tradition reports that his relics were first kept in Sabina, then moved in the 9th century to the abbey of Farfa, the great monastery of the region.

## A family of martyrs

Tradition makes Getulius the husband of Saint Symphorosa. After his death, she in turn is said to have been summoned by Hadrian, who wanted to dedicate his villa at Tibur, today's Tivoli. Refusing to sacrifice to the gods, she was put to death, and then her seven sons, Crescens, Julian, Nemesius, Primitivus, Justin, Stacteus and Eugene, who are honored on July 18. The ruins of an ancient basilica dedicated to Saint Symphorosa still stand on the Via Tiburtina, between Rome and Tivoli. This link between the two accounts is mainly a tradition, but it offers a beautiful image: a whole family passing on the faith and keeping it to the end.

## Devotion and art

Saint Getulius is listed in the Roman Martyrology on June 10, with his companions. His cult has remained mostly local, in Sabina and the area around Tivoli. There is no well-established early iconography of his own: he is shown as a Roman soldier, with the palm of martyrdom, sometimes alongside Saint Symphorosa and their sons.

## What can we learn from Saint Getulius?

Even if his life is known to us through a legendary account, Saint Getulius offers a strong figure: a man who left his career for Christ, who opened his home to prayer, and whose witness converted his persecutor. He is also the image of a father who passes the faith on to his family. You can pray to him for fathers, for Christian couples, for believers in the military, and for those who must choose between success and conscience.

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

## Where to pray to Saint Getulius

- **Farfa Abbey** (Fara in Sabina, Lazio): the great monastery of Sabina where tradition places his relics.
- **Tivoli** (Lazio): the town of Saint Symphorosa and the seven brothers.
- **Via Tiburtina**, between Rome and Tivoli: the ruins of the Basilica of Saint Symphorosa.

PRAYER

# Prayer to Saint Getulius for Families and Fathers

According to tradition, Saint Getulius was a Roman officer who became a Christian, the husband of Saint Symphorosa, who opened his home in Sabina to prayer and was martyred under Emperor Hadrian, after converting the man sent to arrest him. This prayer is an original composition inspired by his life, not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him fathers, married couples and all who want to pass on the faith.

## Prayer to Saint Getulius

*Saint Getulius,*
*you left the honors of the army*
*to serve one Lord alone, Christ.*
*You made your house a place of prayer*
*and your family a school of faith.*

*The one who came to arrest you became your brother,*
*touched by the truth of your life.*
*Teach me to bear witness without fear and without hatred,*
*so that my words and my actions lead to God.*

*Pray for fathers,*
*for husbands and wives who want to love each other in the Lord,*
*for parents who pass on the faith to their children.*
*Pray for soldiers and for all who carry responsibility,*
*that they may stay faithful to their conscience.*

*May our homes be, like yours,*
*places where people pray, welcome and hope.*
*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## When to pray to Saint Getulius

- On his feast day, June 10, shortly before Father's Day.
- For a father, or for a couple going through a hard time.
- When you must choose between your career and your conscience.
- For someone who is hostile to you, that they may discover Christ.
- For members of the military and their families.

## A prayer for the home

You can also simply say together, as a family:

> *Lord, bless our home and all who live in it.*
> *Keep us united in love and faithful to your word.*
> *Saint Getulius and Saint Symphorosa, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Getulius from June 2 to 10, and read the life of Saint Getulius.

NOVENA

# Novena to Saint Getulius

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Getulius as tradition tells it: a converted Roman officer, husband of Saint Symphorosa, martyred in Sabina under Emperor Hadrian. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, June 10, begin on June 2. It is especially suited to praying for families and fathers, and you can pray it at any 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 Getulius, pray for us." If you can, pray it as a family. The small act suggested each day helps you live it concretely.

## Day 1: A soldier touched by Christ

Getulius served in the Roman army. One day he met Christ, and his life changed direction. No situation can keep God from calling us.

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for calling me to know you. Renew in me today the joy of my conversion.

**Today:** Remember a moment when you felt God's call, and give thanks to him.

## Day 2: Leaving honors behind

To follow Christ, Getulius gave up his career. He did not seek the approval of others, but the truth. Some sacrifices set us free.

**Prayer:** Lord, free me from the need to be admired. May I seek your gaze first.

**Today:** Do something good in secret, without telling anyone.

## Day 3: An open house

Retired to Sabina, Getulius opened his home to the Christians of the region. It became a place of prayer and welcome. Our homes, too, can become little churches.

**Prayer:** Lord, make our home a place where people pray and are welcomed. Bless all who enter it.

**Today:** Invite someone who lives alone to share a meal or some time at your home.

## Day 4: Husband and wife in the Lord

Tradition joins Getulius to Saint Symphorosa. Together they lived their faith in a hostile world. Christian marriage is a covenant in which each helps the other toward God.

**Prayer:** Lord, bless married couples, those who love each other, those who are struggling and those who have separated. Give them your peace.

**Today:** Pray for a couple you know, or show some tenderness to your spouse.

## Day 5: Passing on the faith

According to tradition, the seven sons of Getulius and Symphorosa remained faithful even to martyrdom. They had received the faith in their family. Passing it on happens first through example.

**Prayer:** Lord, help parents pass on the faith by the way they live. Keep children and young people close to you.

**Today:** Pray for your children, godchildren or grandchildren, naming them one by one.

## Day 6: The persecutor converted

Caerealis came to arrest Getulius, but he was touched by his faith and asked for baptism. The peaceful witness of a Christian can disarm hostility.

**Prayer:** Lord, I entrust to you someone who is hostile to me. Touch their heart, and change mine as well.

**Today:** Say something good about someone you are in conflict with.

## Day 7: Together in the trial

Getulius did not face the judges alone: Amantius, Caerealis and Primitivus were with him. In times of trial, fellowship gives the strength to hold on.

**Prayer:** Lord, give me brothers and sisters to walk with me. And make me a support for those going through hard times.

**Today:** Offer practical help to someone in difficulty.

## Day 8: Stronger than fire

The Passion says the flames spared the martyrs. Beyond the wondrous story, it is an image of God's love, stronger than any violence.

**Prayer:** Lord, when I pass through the fire of trial, hold me in your hand. I believe your love is stronger than everything.

**Today:** Pray for Christians who are persecuted today.

## Day 9: Faithful to the end

Getulius gave his life for Christ. He leaves us the example of complete faithfulness, lived first in the ordinary life of a family, and then even to martyrdom.

**Prayer:** Lord, keep me faithful all the days of my life. Through the intercession of Saint Getulius, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

**Today:** Pray together as a family, even briefly, to close the novena.

## Living the novena with Saint Getulius

The life of Saint Getulius has come down to us through a partly legendary account, but it says something true about the faith of the first Christians: it was lived in families, in open homes, and it went as far as the gift of self. This novena is a good occasion to pray for your family, for a father or husband, or for a home in difficulty. It also comes shortly before Father's Day: you can entrust to Saint Getulius all fathers, those who are present, those who are absent and those who have passed away.

## Closing prayer

> *Saint Getulius,*
> *soldier who became a disciple,*
> *husband and father faithful even to martyrdom,*
> *present to God the intention I have entrusted to him during these nine days.*
> *Obtain for our families unity, peace and faith,*
> *and for me the courage to stay faithful to Christ in every circumstance.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

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