BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Gibrian

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: May 8

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IN BRIEF

Saint Gibrian

Priest from Ireland, evangelizer of Champagne, died around 509.

Feast day	May 8
Born	5th century, Ireland (according to tradition)
Died	c. 509, near Châlons, at the site of the village of Saint-Gibrien (Marne), according to tradition
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Gibrian for the Sick and for Pilgrims

Novena to Saint Gibrian

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Gibrian

Saint Gibrian (Gibrien in French) was a priest from Ireland who lived in Champagne at the turn of the 5th and 6th centuries and died there around 509, near Châlons. According to tradition, he was ordained a priest by Saint Remigius of Reims, together with his brother Tressan, and evangelized the region with several members of his family. Forgotten for centuries, he became in the 12th century the focus of a great pilgrimage at the abbey of Saint-Remi in Reims, where his relics rested. His feast day is May 8.

Who was Saint Gibrian?

Gibrian's life is known only through late traditions, whose core was fixed in Reims at the time when his cult flourished, in the 12th century. They make him one of a group of Irish brothers and sisters who came to the continent to lead a life of prayer and apostolate. The details of this account cannot be verified. On the other hand, the history of his relics and of his pilgrimage in Reims is well documented, notably by the collection of miracles written in the 12th century, which historians have studied as a valuable witness to illness and healing in the Middle Ages.

Key dates in the life of Gibrian

- **5th century**: Born in Ireland, according to tradition, into a family of ten children.
- **Late 5th century**: Having come to Gaul with several of his brothers and sisters, he is ordained a priest by Saint Remigius, bishop of Reims, like his brother Tressan.
- **Afterward**: He evangelizes Champagne and leads a retired life near the Marne, in the region of Châlons.

- **c. 509**: He dies, according to tradition, at the place where the village of Saint-Gibrien (Marne) stands today, and is buried in a chapel.
- **c. 892**: The chapel where he rested is devastated by the Normans.
- **10th century**: His body is found intact under the ruins and moved to the abbey of Saint-Remi in Reims.
- **Late 11th century**: Under King Philip I, the gold and silver shrine containing it is melted down to feed the poor during a famine.
- **April 16, 1145**: Abbot Odo has his relics placed in a new shrine; many miracles are then reported.

An Irish family in Champagne

According to tradition, Gibrian had nine brothers and sisters. Several of them left Ireland and came to Gaul, where they led a consecrated life. His brother, Saint Tressan, and he were ordained priests by Saint Remigius, the bishop of Reims who had baptized King Clovis. His sister, Saint Prompsia, accompanied him in the evangelization of Champagne. This account, which links Irish pilgrims with the great figure of Remigius, reflects the importance of monks and priests from Ireland in the Christian life of Gaul, even though the chronology and family ties cannot be established with certainty.

Gibrian is said to have settled on the bank of the Marne, near Châlons, in a life of prayer and preaching. The village of Saint-Gibrien, in the Marne, bears his name: tradition places his death there, around 509. He was buried in a chapel, and his memory gradually faded.

Relics found again and a shrine given to the poor

Around 892, the chapel where Gibrian rested was ravaged by the Normans. In the 10th century, his body was discovered under the ruins, still intact. The relic was then carried to Reims and placed on an altar of the abbey of Saint-Remi,

in a shrine of gold and silver. Under the reign of Philip I, during a famine, this precious shrine was melted down to buy food for the poor: a gesture that says much about what the Church expects of the riches dedicated to the saints.

The great pilgrimage of the 12th century

In the 12th century, Abbot Odo of Saint-Remi decided to carry out the recognition and translation of the relics of Gibrian. He ordered a new shrine from a goldsmith named Hubert, and the ceremony took place on April 16, 1145. From that moment, although the saint had been forgotten for centuries, healings multiplied at his shrine. Crowds flocked there, so much so that the abbot asked a monk, Baldwin, to record the testimonies. He noted the names of those who came seeking healing and went away freed from their illness. This collection has been the subject of historical studies on illness and pilgrimage in the Middle Ages.

Devotion and memory

Saint Gibrian is celebrated on May 8; some local calendars also mention him on October 7. A carved wooden piece known as the "staff of Saint Gibrian" is kept in a museum in Reims. The village of Saint-Gibrien, near Châlons-en-Champagne, keeps his name. He can be shown as a priest, holding a pilgrim's staff, a reminder of his coming from Ireland.

What can we learn from Saint Gibrian?

Gibrian was a pilgrim who came from far away to serve the Gospel in a land that was not his own. His life remained hidden, to the point that he was forgotten for six centuries; then God made his tomb a place of comfort for crowds of sick people. His story also reminds us that the gold of shrines is worth less than the lives of the poor. You can pray to him for the sick, for migrants and missionaries, and for Champagne.

Where to pray to Saint Gibrian

- **The basilica of Saint-Remi in Reims** (Marne): the former abbey church where his relics were venerated and where the great pilgrimage of the 12th century took place.
- **Saint-Gibrien** (Marne): the village that bears his name, where tradition places his death.
- **Châlons-en-Champagne** and the banks of the Marne: the region of his apostolate.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Gibrian for the Sick and for Pilgrims

Saint Gibrian, a priest from Ireland, was ordained by Saint Remigius according to tradition and evangelized Champagne, where he died around 509. In the 12th century, his relics, venerated at the abbey of Saint-Remi in Reims, drew crowds of sick people, and many healings were reported. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him the sick, pilgrims and those who live far from their homeland.

Prayer to Saint Gibrian

Saint Gibrian,
you left Ireland and your home
to proclaim Christ in a foreign land.
Give me a ready heart
and the courage to set out when God calls me.

You who were forgotten for centuries,
and then visited in prayer by so many sick people,
look upon those who suffer in body and in heart.
Obtain for them relief, patience and peace,
and support those who care for them.

Teach me to prefer the poor to gold,
like the Church that gave up your shrine to feed the hungry.
Watch over Champagne and over all pilgrims.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Gibrian

- On May 8, his feast day.
- For someone who is sick, or when your own health is tested.
- For migrants and those who live far from their country.
- Before a pilgrimage.
- For the poor and those who suffer from hunger.

A short invocation

> *Saint Gibrian, pilgrim of God,*
> *pray for the sick and for those who care for them. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Gibrian from April 30 to May 8, and read the life of Saint Gibrian.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Gibrian

This novena follows Saint Gibrian, an Irish priest who came to Champagne and died around 509, whose relics were venerated in Reims. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. To finish it on his feast day, May 8, begin on April 30. You can also pray it at any other time of the year. The episodes of his life come from late traditions, which mix history and legend.

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 Gibrian, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A large family

According to tradition, Gibrian had nine brothers and sisters. Several of them gave themselves to God. Faith is lived and handed on in the family.

Prayer: Lord, bless my family, my brothers and sisters, and make faith and affection grow among us.

Act of the day: Get in touch with a brother, a sister or a cousin.

Day 2: Leaving Ireland

Gibrian left his island for Gaul. Like many Irish monks, he made his life a pilgrimage for Christ.

Prayer: Lord, teach me not to cling to my securities, and to follow you wherever you call me.

Act of the day: Pray for migrants and welcome kindly someone who comes from elsewhere.

Day 3: Ordained by Saint Remigius

According to tradition, Remigius, bishop of Reims, ordained him a priest with his brother Tressan. He received his mission from the Church.

Prayer: Lord, bless our bishops and priests, and raise up new vocations among us.

Act of the day: Pray for the priest of your parish, or thank him.

Day 4: Proclaiming the Gospel

With his sister Prompsia, Gibrian traveled through Champagne to proclaim Christ. Mission is lived together.

Prayer: Lord, give me the joy of proclaiming your Gospel around me, by my words and by my life.

Act of the day: Share with someone a Gospel passage that has touched you.

Day 5: Prayer by the Marne

Gibrian led a retired life, near the river. Prayer nourished his mission.

Prayer: Lord, may prayer be the source of all I do.

Act of the day: Take a quiet time of prayer, near water or in nature if you can.

Day 6: Forgotten

After his death, his chapel was destroyed and his memory faded for centuries. But nothing given to God is lost.

Prayer: Lord, when I feel forgotten or useless, remind me that you know me and love me.

Act of the day: Visit or write to an elderly or isolated person.

Day 7: Gold given to the poor

During a famine, Gibrian's golden shrine was melted down to feed the poor. The saint is honored when the hungry are fed.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to share my goods with those who lack what they need.

Act of the day: Give to a food bank or a charity.

Day 8: Crowds of the sick

In 1145 his relics were placed in a new shrine, and the sick flocked to it. Many went away healed. God comforts his people.

Prayer: Lord, look upon the sick I carry in my heart. Relieve them and give them your peace.

Act of the day: Pray by name for someone who is sick, and send them news or pay them a visit.

Day 9: A saint for pilgrims

The monk Baldwin wrote down the names of those whose prayers were answered. Every name counts in the eyes of God. Gibrian, a pilgrim from Ireland, accompanies those who are on the way.

Prayer: Lord, guide me on the road of life to you. Through the intercession of Saint Gibrian, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Thank God for a grace received and, if possible, attend Mass.

Closing prayer

Saint Gibrian,
priest from Ireland and pilgrim of Christ,
you sowed the Gospel in Champagne
and your tomb became a place of comfort.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Support the sick and those who care for them,
and teach me to share with the poor.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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