BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Giuseppe Moscati

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: April 12

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IN BRIEF

Saint Giuseppe Moscati

Italian doctor (1880-1927), professor and head of department in Naples, canonized in 1987.

Feast day	April 12
Born	July 25, 1880, Benevento (Campania, Italy)
Died	April 12, 1927, Naples (Italy)
Canonized	October 25, 1987 by John Paul II (beatified November 16, 1975 by Paul VI)
Era	20th century

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Novena to Saint Giuseppe Moscati

Church of the Gesù Nuovo, Naples

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Giuseppe Moscati

Saint Giuseppe Moscati (Joseph Moscati) was a Neapolitan doctor, born in Benevento in 1880 and died in Naples in 1927. A professor, researcher and head of department at the Hospital of the Incurables, he cared for the poor without counting the cost and united science and faith throughout his life. Beatified by Paul VI in 1975 and canonized by John Paul II in 1987, he rests in the church of the Gesù Nuovo in Naples. His feast day is April 12, the day of his death, and in Naples November 16.

Who was Saint Giuseppe Moscati?

Giuseppe Moscati was a layman, a doctor of his time, who never wore a religious habit. A brilliant student, then a respected researcher in physiological chemistry, he could have had a great university career. He preferred to stay at the bedside of the sick, especially the poorest, whom he often saw free of charge. For him, the sick person was an image of the suffering Christ, and caring for the body never went without attention to the soul. His short and very full life is well documented by the testimonies gathered during his canonization process and by his letters, which are almost the only writings he left.

Key dates in the life of Giuseppe Moscati

- **July 25, 1880**: Born in Benevento, into the family of Francesco Moscati, a magistrate, and Rosa De Luca, who would have nine children; he is baptized six days later.
- **1889**: The family lives in Naples, where he enters the Vittorio Emanuele classical high school.

- **1897**: He finishes secondary school and enrolls in medicine; his father dies on December 21.
- **August 4, 1903**: He receives his medical doctorate with the praise of the examiners, then joins the Hospital of the Incurables.
- **April 8, 1906**: During the eruption of Vesuvius, he has the hospital of Torre del Greco evacuated just before the roof collapses.
- **1911**: He works against the cholera epidemic in Naples and becomes an associate member of the Royal Academy of Medicine.
- **1919**: He is appointed director of the men's ward at the Hospital of the Incurables.
- **April 12, 1927**: On Holy Tuesday, he dies suddenly at home in Naples, aged 46.
- **November 16, 1930**: His body is moved from Poggioreale cemetery to the church of the Gesù Nuovo.
- **October 25, 1987**: John Paul II canonizes him in Saint Peter's Square, twelve years after his beatification by Paul VI.

A vocation born at a brother's bedside

The Moscati family came from Santa Lucia di Serino, near Avellino. His father, a judge, was posted successively to Cassino, Benevento, Ancona and then Naples. Giuseppe grew up in a believing family, made his First Communion in 1888 and was confirmed in 1890. At school, one of his teachers was the volcanologist Giuseppe Mercalli.

A family event shaped his life. His brother Alberto, injured in a fall from a horse, later suffered violent epileptic seizures. Giuseppe cared for him for years. Faced with this suffering, he discovered both the limits of medicine and the strength that faith gives. He chose to study medicine in order to serve the sick. Alberto died after some ten years of illness.

The doctor of the Incurables

After his doctorate, Moscati passed several competitive examinations and became an assistant, then a professor. He taught physiological chemistry and clinical medicine, directed the institute of pathological anatomy and trained many students. In 1906, during the eruption of Vesuvius, he had the elderly and paralyzed patients of the hospital of Torre del Greco evacuated in time, then asked that those who had helped him be rewarded, insisting that his own name not be mentioned. In 1911, he studied the origin of the cholera epidemic and proposed measures to clean up the city, many of which were carried out.

His mother died of diabetes in 1914. A few years later, he was among the first doctors in Naples to use insulin, then a recent discovery, and to teach its use. During the First World War, his request to enlist as a volunteer was refused: he was given charge of wounded soldiers instead, and treated about three thousand of them. In the autopsy room, he had a crucifix hung with these words of the prophet Hosea: "O death, I will be your death."

Science, faith and the poor

Every day, Moscati began with Mass and Communion. He saw in the sick "figures of Christ" and reminded his colleagues that they must care not only for bodies but also for "the groaning souls" who came to them. He lived simply, dressed modestly and gave up certain academic honors to devote himself to the old hospitals of Naples. He treated free of charge those who could not pay: "my little money is for the poor like me," he used to say. His biographers have noted a Franciscan stamp in the way he lived poverty, even though he did not belong to the Third Order.

His letters express his trust: "God never abandons anyone," he wrote in 1921 to a discouraged young doctor. To another, he recalled that in choosing medicine he had committed himself to "a sublime mission."

His death, his cult and his canonization

On April 12, 1927, Holy Tuesday, Giuseppe Moscati attended Mass, spent the morning at the hospital, then as usual received patients at home. Around 3 p.m., he felt unwell, sat down in his armchair and died peacefully. The veneration that had surrounded him in life grew even stronger after his death. Three years later, on November 16, 1930, the Archbishop of Naples, Cardinal Alessio Ascalesi, allowed his body to be moved to the church of the Gesù Nuovo, run by the Jesuits.

Paul VI beatified him on November 16, 1975. The healing of a young man suffering from leukemia, Giuseppe Montefusco, was recognized as a miracle in 1987. John Paul II canonized him on October 25, 1987, at the end of the Synod of Bishops on the laity, presenting him as "the concrete realization of the ideal of the Christian layman." The Roman Martyrology lists him on April 12; in Naples, his feast is celebrated on November 16, the anniversary of the translation, so that it does not fall during Holy Week.

What can we learn from Saint Giuseppe Moscati?

Giuseppe Moscati shows that one can become a saint in a demanding profession, without leaving the world. He took science seriously, without ever setting it against faith. He cared for people with skill and with tenderness, seeing in each patient a person loved by God. You can pray to him for doctors, nurses and medical students, for the sick, and for all who seek to live their work as a service.

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

Where to pray to Saint Giuseppe Moscati

- **The church of the Gesù Nuovo** (Naples): his tomb, and the rooms that keep the memory of his life and medical practice.

- **Benevento Cathedral**: a marble statue of the saint, in the Blessed Sacrament chapel of his native town.
- **The Hospital of the Incurables** (Naples): the place where he worked and taught for most of his life.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Giuseppe Moscati for the Sick and Caregivers

Saint Giuseppe Moscati, a doctor in Naples, cared for the sick and the poor, seeing in them the face of Christ. He died in 1927, after a life shared between the hospital, the university and prayer. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him the sick, caregivers and all who work in the service of life.

Prayer to Saint Giuseppe Moscati

Saint Giuseppe Moscati,
physician of bodies and friend of souls,
you saw in every patient
the face of the suffering Christ.
Look upon those who suffer today
and present them to the Lord of life.

You who began each day with the Eucharist,
teach me to draw from God the strength to love.
You who united science and faith,
enlighten doctors, researchers and caregivers,
so that they may serve with skill and kindness.

You who cared for the poor without asking anything,
give me a generous and simple heart.
Obtain for me, if it is God's will,
the grace I entrust to you [intention].
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Giuseppe Moscati

- On his feast day, April 12, or on November 16, when Naples celebrates him.
- Before an operation, a medical test or the announcement of a diagnosis.
- For a sick loved one, especially when medicine seems powerless.
- For doctors, nurses, medical students and researchers.
- When work becomes heavy and you need to find again the meaning of your service.

A prayer for the sick

> *Lord Jesus, physician of souls and bodies,*
> *sustain those who suffer and those who care for them.*
> *Saint Giuseppe Moscati, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Giuseppe Moscati from April 4 to April 12, and read the life of Saint Giuseppe Moscati.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Giuseppe Moscati

This novena offers nine days of prayer with Saint Giuseppe Moscati, a Neapolitan doctor who died in 1927 and was canonized in 1987. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition; it is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, April 12, begin on April 4. If you prefer to follow the calendar of Naples, pray it from November 8 to November 16. You can also pray it at any time, especially for someone who is sick.

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

Day 1: A family that hands on the faith

Giuseppe grew up in a large, believing family, where his father, a magistrate, served justice. There he learned prayer and a sense of duty.

Prayer: Lord, bless our families. Make them places where people learn to know you and to serve others.

Act of the day: Pray for your parents, living or departed, and for those who handed on the faith to you.

Day 2: At Alberto's bedside

His brother Alberto, injured in a fall from a horse, suffered for years. Giuseppe cared for him patiently. His vocation as a doctor was born of this brotherly love.

Prayer: Lord, give me patience and tenderness for those close to me who are suffering.

Act of the day: Get news of a sick person around you, with a visit or a call.

Day 3: Studying in order to serve

Moscati worked seriously and became a respected researcher. For him, study was not an end in itself: it made it possible to serve the sick better.

Prayer: Lord, bless students and researchers. May their intelligence be placed at the service of life.

Act of the day: Do carefully a task you tend to rush.

Day 4: Courage in the face of danger

In 1906, during the eruption of Vesuvius, he had the patients of Torre del Greco evacuated just before the roof collapsed, then asked that his name not be mentioned.

Prayer: Lord, give me the courage to act when others need me, and the humility not to seek glory.

Act of the day: Do a discreet service, without telling anyone.

Day 5: Mass every morning

Every day, before the hospital, Moscati attended Mass and received Communion. From there he drew the strength for his day.

Prayer: Jesus, present in the Eucharist, be the source of my days and of my strength.

Act of the day: Attend a weekday Mass, or spend a time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

Day 6: Seeing Christ in the sick

"Sick people are figures of Christ," he wrote. He asked caregivers to look after bodies, but also after suffering souls.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes so that I may recognize you in those who suffer.

Act of the day: Pray for the staff of a hospital near you.

Day 7: The doctor of the poor

Moscati treated free of charge those who could not pay and lived simply himself. His money, he said, was for the poorest.

Prayer: Lord, free me from attachment to money and make me attentive to those who lack care.

Act of the day: Give to a charity that provides care for the poor.

Day 8: God abandons no one

To a discouraged young doctor, he wrote that God never abandons anyone, and that the more alone one feels, the more one can discover a mysterious strength that sustains: that strength is God.

Prayer: Lord, in my discouragement, let me feel that you are there and that you carry me.

Act of the day: Write a word of encouragement to someone going through a trial.

Day 9: A peaceful death

On April 12, 1927, Holy Tuesday, after Mass, the hospital and his consultations, he sat down in his armchair and died peacefully, aged 46.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to live each day as a service, and to die in your peace. Through the intercession of Saint Giuseppe Moscati, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Pray for the dying and for those who accompany them.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Giuseppe Moscati,*
> *you who healed with science and with love,*
> *present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *Watch over the sick and those who care for them,*
> *and teach me to serve Christ*
> *in each of my brothers and sisters.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

PILGRIMAGE

Church of the Gesù Nuovo, Naples

The church of the Gesù Nuovo stands on the large square of the same name, in the heart of the historic center of Naples. The main Jesuit church of the city and a masterpiece of Neapolitan Baroque, it has kept the body of Saint Giuseppe Moscati, the "holy doctor" of Naples, since 1930. Many of the faithful come here to entrust their sick to his intercession.

A palace turned into a church

The facade, very unusual for a church, is covered with diamond-point ashlar carved from piperno, a dark volcanic stone. It dates from 1470 and belonged to the palace of the Sanseverino princes, one of the great Renaissance residences of Naples. After the family's property was confiscated, the Jesuits bought the complex in 1584 and built their new church there, called the "Gesù Nuovo" to distinguish it from the older one. Work continued until the early 17th century, and the interior decoration was enriched until the 18th century.

The tomb of Saint Giuseppe Moscati

Giuseppe Moscati died on April 12, 1927, and was first buried in Poggioreale cemetery. On November 16, 1930, his body was moved to the Gesù Nuovo amid a large crowd and placed near the altar of Saint Francis Xavier. After his beatification, his remains were placed in 1977 in a bronze reliquary, beneath the altar of the Visitation. Nearby rooms recall his life and his medical practice, and many ex-votos bear witness to the gratitude of those who have turned to him.

What to see

The interior, in the shape of a Greek cross, is richly decorated with polychrome marble and frescoes. On the inner facade, Francesco Solimena painted in 1725 a vast fresco, *Heliodorus Driven from the Temple*, considered one of his masterpieces. The side chapels hold works by the great artists of Neapolitan Baroque.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Giuseppe Moscati. Before his reliquary, entrust to him your sick, caregivers and those waiting for a diagnosis, then say the prayer to Saint Giuseppe Moscati. Attending Mass in this church, as he did every morning, is a beautiful way to join his prayer. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Practical information

The church is on Piazza del Gesù Nuovo, in the historic center of Naples, a few steps from the church of Santa Chiara; it is easy to reach on foot from the central metro stations. It is an active place of worship: modest dress and silence are requested, especially during services. Opening hours and Mass times may vary: check with the Jesuit community before your visit.

Credits and sources

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