BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Glodesind of Metz

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: July 25

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IN BRIEF

Saint Glodesind of Metz

Young noblewoman of Austrasia who refused marriage to found a community of nuns in Metz, early 7th century.

Feast day	July 25
Born	c. 572 or 580, Austrasia
Died	July 25, c. 608 or 610, Metz
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	7th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Glodesind for Vocations and Freedom of Conscience

Novena to Saint Glodesind of Metz

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Glodesind of Metz

Saint Glodesind (Glossinde in French) was a young noblewoman of Austrasia at the end of the 6th century who refused marriage in order to consecrate herself to God and founded in Metz a community of nuns, the abbey that bears her name today. She died young, on a July 25, around 608 or 610. Her life is known only through accounts written three centuries later, strongly marked by legend. Her feast day is July 25.

Who was Saint Glodesind?

Glodesind is one of the first great female figures in the Christian history of Metz. What is told of her comes first from an anonymous Life, dated to the late 9th or early 10th century, and then from a second Life written between 960 and 984 by John, a monk of the abbey of Saint-Arnoul, at the request of the nuns of Sainte-Glossinde. These texts present Glodesind as the foundress of their community and credit her with wondrous episodes. Historians therefore read them with caution, and some writers go so far as to consider her biography largely legendary. The cult paid to her in Metz is nevertheless ancient: as early as the 830s, Bishop Drogo had her relics transferred into the abbey church, inside the city.

Key dates in the life of Glodesind

- **c. 572 or 580**: Born into the Frankish nobility of Austrasia; her father, Wintrio, is duke of Champagne.
- **Youth**: Her father wants to marry her to a young Frank, Obolenus, but she wishes to remain a virgin and consecrate herself to God.
- **The wedding day**: According to the account, Obolenus is arrested on the king's orders, then executed.

- **Shortly after**: Threatened with another marriage, she takes refuge in the cathedral of Metz, where she stays shut in for a week; there she receives the veil of a nun.
- **Then**: She is trained by her aunt Rothilde, who leads a community of young nuns in Trier.
- **c. 604**: Back in Metz, she founds a community of nuns there on lands given by her parents.
- **July 25, c. 608 or 610**: Dies in Metz, at about thirty years of age.
- **830s**: Bishop Drogo has her relics transferred into the abbey church, inside the city.
- **Between 960 and 984**: John of Saint-Arnoul writes a new Life of the saint, at the nuns' request.

A bride who chose Christ

Glodesind was born into a great family of the Frankish aristocracy. Her father, Wintrio, was duke of Champagne and one of the leaders of the nobility of Austrasia, the eastern Frankish kingdom whose capital was then Metz. Like many young women of her rank, she was promised to an advantageous marriage: her father chose for her a young Frank of good family, Obolenus. But Glodesind had already decided to remain a virgin and to consecrate her life to God.

The account tells that on the very day of the wedding, Obolenus was arrested on the king's orders, then executed. Glodesind saw in this tragic event a sign that God approved her plan. Her father, however, still wanted to marry her off. She then fled to the cathedral of Metz and shut herself in. For a week, her parents had the doors guarded to force her to give in, and she remained without food or drink. On the last day, the Life says, three young men appeared and placed the veil of a nun on her head: tradition saw in them angels come to set her free. Her parents then gave up their plan.

Foundress of Sainte-Glossinde

Glodesind then went to Trier, to her aunt Rothilde, who led a community of young nuns. There she learned community life, prayer and obedience. Once trained, she returned to Metz and gathered there, according to the Life, about a hundred young women, on lands given by her parents. The community settled near one of the city gates, and the abbey of Sainte-Glossinde is one of the few monasteries in Metz to have always kept its original site.

Glodesind did not lead her community for long: she died about six years later, on a July 25, around 608 or 610, aged about thirty.

Devotion, relics and memory

According to the Life, some twenty years after her death, Glodesind appeared in a dream to a nun and asked for a church to be built outside the city walls; her body was moved there and found intact. In the 9th century, Bishop Drogo had her relics transferred into the abbey church, inside the city, perhaps to better protect the nuns' enclosure and gather the saint's cult in a single place. In the 10th century, Bishop Adalbero I placed his niece Himiltrude at the head of the abbey, whose church and buildings were then rebuilt and enlarged.

Since 1802, the abbey buildings have housed the bishop's residence of Metz, and the former abbey church, rebuilt in the 18th century, has become the chapel of the bishop's house. A reliquary of the saint is kept there behind the high altar, along with a 17th-century painting showing the angels giving her the veil. Saint Glodesind is celebrated on July 25. She is shown as a nun or abbess, with the veil, sometimes with the angels who consecrated her according to the legend.

What can we learn from Saint Glodesind?

Behind the wondrous accounts, the figure of Glodesind is that of a young woman who dared to say no to a future mapped out for her, in order to follow the call she felt in her heart. She held firm despite pressure from her family, then took time to be formed before founding. Her short life gave birth to a community that lasted nearly twelve centuries. You can pray to her for young people discerning their vocation, for those under family pressure, for nuns, and for the Church of Metz.

To pray with her, see the prayer to Saint Glodesind and the novena to Saint Glodesind.

Where to pray to Saint Glodesind

- **Chapel of Sainte-Glossinde** (bishop's house of Metz): the former abbey church, which keeps her reliquary; it is mainly open to the public during European Heritage Days.
- **Saint-Étienne Cathedral in Metz**: the church where, according to the Life, she took refuge and received the veil.
- **Basilica of Notre-Dame de Sion** (Saxon-Sion, Meurthe-et-Moselle): a stained-glass window shows her.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Glodesind for Vocations and Freedom of Conscience

Saint Glodesind, a young noblewoman of Austrasia, refused the marriage her family wanted to impose on her in order to consecrate herself to God, then founded a community of nuns in Metz at the beginning of the 7th century. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to her young people seeking their vocation and those under pressure from those around them.

Prayer to Saint Glodesind

Saint Glodesind,
daughter of a noble family,
you preferred Christ to every honor
and kept your heart free for him.
Help me to hear God's call
and to answer it with courage.

In the cathedral of Metz, you held firm,
alone, hungry, but trusting,
until God came to consecrate you.
Support those who are pressured
to give up their conscience or their faith.

You who gathered sisters for prayer,
bless nuns and consecrated communities,
enlighten young people seeking their way,
and watch over the Church of Metz.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Glodesind

- On her feast day, July 25.
- For a young person discerning a vocation, to marriage, priesthood or consecrated life.
- When facing family or social pressure contrary to one's conscience.
- For nuns and communities of consecrated life.
- For the diocese and city of Metz.

A prayer for vocations

Lord, call young people to follow you,
and give them the freedom to answer you.
Saint Glodesind, pray for them. Amen.

To prepare for her feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Glodesind from July 17 to 25, and read the life of Saint Glodesind.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Glodesind of Metz

Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is inspired by the life of Saint Glodesind, a young noblewoman of Austrasia and foundress of a community of nuns in Metz, who died around 608 or 610. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on her feast day, July 25, begin on July 17. You can also pray it 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 Glodesind, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely. The episodes recounted come from Lives written three centuries after her, which mix history and legend.

Day 1: A child of Austrasia

Glodesind was born into a great Frankish family. She could have settled for the wealth and honors of her rank.

Prayer: Lord, teach me not to set my heart on what passes away.

Act of the day: Give something you value to someone who needs it.

Day 2: A heart already given

Even before a husband was chosen for her, Glodesind had decided to consecrate herself to God. She knew to whom she wished to belong.

Prayer: Lord, may my heart be all yours, in the state of life to which you call me.

Act of the day: Renew, in prayer, the gift of your life to God.

Day 3: A tragedy

On the wedding day, Glodesind's fiancé was arrested and then executed. She went through this tragedy seeking to read God's will in it.

Prayer: Lord, I entrust to you those who suffer a sudden bereavement. Be their light in the night.

Act of the day: Pray for someone grieving a loss.

Day 4: Resisting pressure

Her father still wanted to marry her off. Glodesind stood firm, even against those she loved.

Prayer: Lord, give me the strength to follow my conscience, with gentleness and firmness.

Act of the day: Dare to say no, with charity, to what takes you away from God.

Day 5: A week in the cathedral

Taking refuge in the cathedral of Metz, Glodesind stayed a week without food or drink, guarded by her own family. She put herself entirely in God's hands.

Prayer: Lord, when I feel shut in, teach me to wait for you with trust.

Act of the day: Spend a moment of prayer in a church.

Day 6: The angels' veil

According to the Life, three young men, taken to be angels, gave her the veil of a nun. God answers in his own way those who wait for him.

Prayer: Lord, I thank you for the signs of your presence in my life.

Act of the day: Write down a sign of God's goodness you have received recently.

Day 7: Learning before founding

Glodesind went to be trained in Trier, with her aunt Rothilde. Before guiding others, she agreed to be a disciple.

Prayer: Lord, give me the humility to learn and to receive from others.

Act of the day: Ask advice from someone with experience.

Day 8: A community of prayer

Back in Metz, Glodesind gathered young women for a life of common prayer. Her foundation has come down through the centuries.

Prayer: Lord, bless religious communities and raise up new vocations.

Act of the day: Pray for a religious community, or visit one.

Day 9: A short and fruitful life

Glodesind died at about thirty, a few years after her foundation. Her brief life bore lasting fruit.

Prayer: Lord, may my life bear fruit for you. Through the intercession of Saint Glodesind, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass and pray for those who died young.

Closing prayer

Saint Glodesind,
consecrated virgin and mother of your sisters,
you chose Christ against every pressure
and built in Metz a house of prayer.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Enlighten young people seeking their way,
and keep us faithful to our conscience.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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