

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Gorgonius

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: September 9

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IN BRIEF

Saint Gorgonius

Roman martyr of the early 4th century, patron of the abbey of Gorze in Lorraine.

Feast day	September 9
Died	early 4th century, Rome (or Nicomedia, according to tradition)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	4th century
Patron saint of	Gorze Abbey

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Gorgonius for Faithfulness and Healing

Novena to Saint Gorgonius

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Gorgonius

Saint Gorgonius is a martyr of the early 4th century, buried in Rome in the cemetery "At the Two Laurels," on the Via Labicana. In 766 Saint Chrodegang, bishop of Metz, brought his relics to Lorraine, to the abbey of Gorze, and from there his cult spread throughout France. His feast day is September 9.

Who was Saint Gorgonius?

Gorgonius (in French *Gorgon*) is one of those martyrs of the early centuries whose name and tomb we know, but very little of their life. Tradition identifies him with an officer of the court of Emperor Diocletian who, having become a Christian, refused to deny his faith together with his companion Dorotheus and was put to death during the Great Persecution, around 303-304. Historians, however, distinguish the Gorgonius of Nicomedia, mentioned by the historian Eusebius of Caesarea, from the Gorgonius of Rome, honored on the Via Labicana. Today the Roman Martyrology commemorates on September 9 the Roman martyr buried "At the Two Laurels." For the faithful of Lorraine, he is simply Saint Gorgon, the martyr whose relics made Gorze famous.

Key dates

- **c. 303-304**: During the persecution of Diocletian, he is put to death for refusing to deny Christ, according to tradition.
- **4th century**: He is buried in the cemetery "At the Two Laurels," on the Via Labicana, in Rome.
- **766**: Saint Chrodegang, bishop of Metz, brings his relics from Rome and places them in the abbey of Gorze, which he had just founded.

- **Late 10th century**: The monks of Gorze write a Panegyric and a collection of Miracles of Saint Gorgonius.
- **11th century**: Part of his relics is moved to the abbey of Saint-Arnould in Metz, then to Cluny, from where his cult spreads across France.

A martyr of the Great Persecution

At the beginning of the 4th century, Emperor Diocletian launched the most violent of all the persecutions against Christians. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, who lived through it, there were Christians serving even in the imperial palace of Nicomedia. Among them, Dorotheus and Gorgonius, high officers of the emperor's household, were ordered to sacrifice to the gods. They refused, and were tortured and then put to death.

In Rome, a martyr named Gorgonius was venerated in the cemetery "At the Two Laurels," on the Via Labicana, the same place where Saints Marcellinus and Peter rested. Tradition brought the two figures together. Historians remain cautious: they may be two different martyrs. What is certain is that from ancient times the Christian community of Rome honored a martyr of this name and kept his tomb.

The relics of Gorze

In the 8th century, Saint Chrodegang, bishop of Metz and a great reformer of the Frankish Church, founded the abbey of Gorze, near Metz. To give his monastery a protector, he obtained relics of Saint Gorgonius in Rome and brought them back to Lorraine in 766. Gorze became one of the great monasteries of medieval Europe, with Saint Gorgonius as its patron.

At the end of the 10th century, the monks of Gorze wrote a Panegyric and a book of Miracles in his honor, including a miracle that took place at Varangéville, in Lorraine. Relics were later entrusted to the abbey of Saint-

Arnould in Metz and to the abbey of Cluny. Through the great Cluniac network, devotion to Saint Gorgonius reached many regions of France.



The church of Saint-Gorgon in Varangéville, Meurthe-et-Moselle.

Devotion and art

Saint Gorgonius is celebrated on September 9. Several French towns bear his name, and many churches are dedicated to him, for example in Metz, Moyeuvre-Grande, Varangéville, Woël, Pouillon, Véron, Plovan and Moustoir-Remungol. Saint-Gorgon chapels still welcome pilgrimages in September, as at Anor, in the Nord department, or at Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville, near Rouen, where the feast of Saint Gorgon was revived in 2001. Popular devotion calls on him against nervous diseases and rheumatism.

He is often shown as a Roman soldier or officer, with the palm of martyrdom. The museum of Épinal keeps a painting from the early 17th century by the Lorraine painter Claude Bassot, showing Saint Gorgonius and Saint Barbara

with a donor. The church of Vienne-en-Bessin, in Calvados, has a painting and a stained glass window of his martyrdom.

What can we learn from Saint Gorgonius?

About Saint Gorgonius we know one thing above all: he preferred Christ to his career and to his life. Whether or not he served at the emperor's court, he was faithful to the end. His story also shows how the faith of the martyrs of Rome nourished, centuries later, the faith of the monks and villages of Lorraine and France. You can pray to him to stay faithful to Christ in your workplace, for persecuted Christians, and for the sick who suffer in their bodies.

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

Where to pray to Saint Gorgonius

- **Gorze** (Moselle, France): the village of the former abbey where Saint Chrodegang placed his relics.
- **Varangéville** (Meurthe-et-Moselle): the church of Saint-Gorgon.
- **Metz** (Moselle): the church of Saint-Gorgon.
- **Anor** (Nord): the Saint-Gorgon chapel and its September pilgrimage.
- **Saint-Martin-de-Boscherville** (Seine-Maritime): the Saint-Gorgon chapel.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Gorgonius for Faithfulness and Healing

Saint Gorgonius is a martyr of the early 4th century, buried in Rome on the Via Labicana. Tradition makes him an officer at the court of Diocletian who refused to deny his faith. His relics, brought to the abbey of Gorze in 766, gave rise to a popular devotion in Lorraine and throughout France. This prayer is an original composition inspired by his life, not an official liturgical text. It asks for faithfulness to Christ and relief for the sick.

Prayer to Saint Gorgonius

Saint Gorgonius,
you preferred Christ to honors and to life itself,
and you stayed faithful under threat and suffering.
The Church of Rome kept your tomb,
and the monks of Gorze welcomed your relics as a treasure.

Obtain for me the grace to be faithful to God
where I work and where I live,
without being ashamed of my faith and without harshness toward anyone.
When I must choose between my success and my conscience,
give me the courage to choose Christ.

You whom so many pilgrims have invoked in their sufferings,
pray for the sick,
for those who are in pain in their bodies and their nerves,
for those worn out by pain.
May they find relief and deep peace.

Pray also for Christians who are persecuted today,
that they may stay strong in their trials.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Gorgonius

- On his feast day, September 9, or during a pilgrimage to a Saint-Gorgon chapel.
- When your faith is frowned upon in your workplace.
- For someone suffering from pain, rheumatism or a nervous illness.
- For persecuted Christians around the world.
- When you must make a difficult decision of conscience.

A prayer for the sick

You can also simply say, at the bedside of a sick person or for yourself:

> *Lord Jesus, you who bore our sufferings,*
> *relieve those who are in pain and keep them in your peace.*
> *Saint Gorgonius, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Gorgonius from September 1 to 9, and read the life of Saint Gorgonius.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Gorgonius

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Gorgonius, a martyr of the early 4th century buried in Rome, whose relics were brought to the abbey of Gorze in 766. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, September 9, begin on September 1. It is suited to asking for faithfulness in faith and to entrusting the sick, 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 Gorgonius, pray for us." The small act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A Christian in the heart of the world

According to tradition, Gorgonius served in the emperor's household. He did not flee the world: he lived his faith there, in an exposed position. Christ sends us, too, to the places where we work.

Prayer: Lord, make my work a place where I stay faithful to you. May my faith shape the way I act.

Today: Offer your working day to God in a few words first thing in the morning.

Day 2: A friendship in faith

Tradition pairs Gorgonius with his companion Dorotheus: they faced the trial together. Faith is lived in community, and a faithful friend is a real support.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the friends who help me believe. Make me a support for those who doubt or suffer.

Today: Check in with a Christian friend and pray for them.

Day 3: Refusing the idol

Christians were asked to sacrifice to the gods of the empire. Gorgonius refused. Our idols have changed their faces: money, power, our self-image. The choice remains the same.

Prayer: Lord, show me the idols in my life, and give me the freedom to put you first.

Today: Give up something today that takes up too much room in your life.

Day 4: In suffering

The martyrs of the Great Persecution were tortured before being put to death. Gorgonius went through suffering united with Christ on the cross. Whoever suffers united with Jesus is never alone.

Prayer: Lord, I entrust to you those who suffer in their bodies. Be their strength and their comfort.

Today: Visit or call someone who is sick.

Day 5: Faithful to the end

Gorgonius gave his life rather than deny Christ. The faithfulness of the martyrs reminds us that faith is not an opinion, but a love that commits your whole life.

Prayer: Lord, keep me faithful in small things, so that I may also be faithful in great ones.

Today: Pray for persecuted Christians in one particular country.

Day 6: A tomb kept with care

In Rome, Christians kept the tomb of Gorgonius on the Via Labicana. Keeping the memory of the saints means keeping alive the faith they handed down to us.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for those who went before me in faith. Grant your peace to our departed.

Today: Pray for your departed loved ones, or bring flowers to a grave.

Day 7: A protector for Gorze

Saint Chrodegang brought the relics of Gorgonius to Lorraine to place his abbey under his protection. Monks prayed there for centuries. The saints stay close to us and intercede for us.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the communion of saints. Bless the monks and nuns who pray for the world.

Today: Pray for a religious community, or write to one to entrust them with an intention.

Day 8: The faith of the villages

Devotion to Saint Gorgonius spread to many villages, with their chapels, pilgrimages and feasts. Popular piety is a simple treasure, through which faith is handed on from generation to generation.

Prayer: Lord, bless rural parishes and those who keep prayer alive in them.

Today: Visit a chapel or a country church and pray there for a while.

Day 9: The crown of the martyrs

The palm placed in the hand of Gorgonius is the sign of his victory: the victory of love over death. The martyr does not lose his life; he gives it and finds it again in God.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live in the hope of eternal life. Through the intercession of Saint Gorgonius, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Today: Give thanks for a time when God gave you the strength to hold on.

Living the novena with Saint Gorgonius

Saint Gorgonius is a martyr about whom we know little, but whose memory has crossed the centuries. This novena invites you to ask him for two graces: to stay faithful to Christ in your daily life, and to carry those who suffer in your prayer. If you are praying it for a sick person, feel free to tell them, or to pray it with them. And if you live near a church or chapel dedicated to Saint Gorgonius, go there at least once during these nine days.

Closing prayer

Saint Gorgonius,
martyr faithful to the end,
you preferred Christ to everything else.
Present to God the intention I have entrusted to him during these nine days.
Obtain for me faithfulness in my choices,
strength in trials,
and relief for those who suffer.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

CREDITS

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