BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Hadelin of Celles

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: February 3

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IN BRIEF

Saint Hadelin of Celles

7th-century monk and hermit, disciple of Saint Remaclus, founder of the community of Celles near Dinant.

Feast day	February 3
Born	c. 617, Aquitaine
Died	c. 690, Celles (province of Namur, Belgium)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	7th century
Patron saint of	Celles, Visé

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Collegiate Church of Saint-Hadelin, Celles

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Hadelin of Celles

Saint Hadelin was a 7th-century monk from Aquitaine and a disciple of Saint Remaclus. Trained at the abbey of Solignac, he came to what is now Belgium and withdrew as a hermit to the banks of the Lesse, near Dinant. The community that formed around him gave rise to the village of Celles and its collegiate church. He died around 690. His relics now rest at Visé, in a famous shrine of Mosan art. His feast day is February 3.

Who was Saint Hadelin?

Hadelin belongs to the generation of monks who evangelized the Meuse valley and the Ardennes in the 7th century, in the wake of Saint Remaclus, the founder of Stavelot and Malmedy. His life was written several centuries after his death, in a *Life of Saint Hadelin* that historians have compared with archaeological discoveries made in the region. Its main lines are simple: a monk who came from the south, a hermitage in a wooded valley, disciples who evangelized the surrounding area, then a community that kept watch over his tomb. His cult, very much alive in the provinces of Namur and Liège, makes him one of the most popular saints of the Meuse region.

Key dates in the life of Hadelin

- **c. 617**: Born in Aquitaine.
- **630s-640s**: He becomes a monk at the abbey of Solignac, near Limoges, whose first abbot is Saint Remaclus.
- **c. 650**: He probably follows Remaclus to Austrasia and lives with him at Stavelot.
- **c. 670**: Guided by Remaclus, he withdraws to a hermitage on the bank of the Lesse, near Dinant; according to tradition, he founds an oratory there.

- **c. 690**: Dies at Celles, among the disciples who have joined him.
- **1030-1040**: The canons of Celles build the Romanesque church that still stands.
- **1046**: Bishop Wazo of Liège has a shrine made for his relics.
- **1338**: The canons leave Celles for Visé and take the shrine with them.

From Solignac to the valley of the Lesse

Hadelin was born in Aquitaine around 617. He entered the monastery of Solignac, founded by Saint Eligius near Limoges, and there he met Saint Remaclus, its first abbot. When Remaclus was called to Austrasia to found the abbeys of Stavelot and Malmedy, Hadelin probably followed him and became his companion. Later, on his master's advice, he sought a more withdrawn life. He settled in a "céle", that is, a hermit's cell, in a small valley of the Lesse, not far from Dinant. The village of Celles takes its name from this Walloon word.

The hermit and his disciples

Hadelin's solitude did not last. Disciples came to join him, drawn by his prayer and his example. They formed a small community that proclaimed the Gospel in the surrounding countryside, still largely pagan. According to tradition, Hadelin founded an oratory at the bottom of the valley around 670. He died around 690, surrounded by his brothers. His tomb became the heart of a community of twelve canons, charged with praying at his grave: that is why the church of Celles bears the title of collegiate church.

The shrine of Saint Hadelin

In 1046, Bishop Wazo of Liège had a shrine made to receive the saint's relics. In 1338, the canons, who no longer felt safe at Celles, moved to Visé, to an estate offered to them by the bishop of Liège, and they took the shrine with them. This masterpiece of Mosan goldsmith's work is still kept in the church of

Saint-Martin in Visé. Every third Sunday of September, it is carried in procession through the town. A confraternity of Our Lady of Loreto and Saint Hadelin keeps his memory alive in Visé.

Devotion and art

Saint Hadelin is celebrated on February 3. His cult unites two places: Celles, where he lived and died, and Visé, which keeps his relics. At Celles, the remarkably well-preserved 11th-century Romanesque collegiate church bears witness to the veneration he has received. A statue depicts him in the village, and a procession in his honor has also been established at Celles.

What can we learn from Saint Hadelin?

Hadelin left his native land to follow a master, then withdrew into solitude to seek God. But his solitude became fruitful: others joined him, a community was born, a village grew. His life shows that prayer does not isolate but radiates. You can pray to him for those who seek silence, for religious communities, for the people of the Meuse valley and for disciples who wish to follow a spiritual guide faithfully.

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

Where to pray to Saint Hadelin

- **Collegiate Church of Saint-Hadelin, Celles** (Houyet, province of Namur): the Romanesque church built on the site of his hermitage.
- **Church of Saint-Martin, Visé** (province of Liège): the shrine of his relics, carried in procession in September.
- **Solignac** (Haute-Vienne, France): the abbey where he became a monk.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Hadelin for Those Who Seek God in Silence

Saint Hadelin, a monk from Aquitaine and disciple of Saint Remaclus, lived as a hermit on the banks of the Lesse, near Dinant, where the community of Celles grew up around him. He died around 690. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him those who seek God in silence, religious communities and the Meuse region.

Prayer to Saint Hadelin

Saint Hadelin,
you left Aquitaine to follow your master Remaclus,
and you sought God in the silence of a valley.
Teach me to listen to those who guide me
and to make within me a cell of prayer.

You whose solitude drew disciples,
let my prayer become brotherly
and my life make others want to know Christ.

Watch over Celles and Visé,
over the people of the Meuse valley,
and over all who proclaim the Gospel.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Hadelin

- On his feast day, February 3.

- During the procession of his shrine in Visé, on the third Sunday of September.
- Before a retreat or a time of silence.
- For monks, nuns and new communities.
- For the people of the provinces of Namur and Liège.

A short invocation

> *Saint Hadelin, hermit of the Lesse,*
> *keep us in the peace of God.*
> *Pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Hadelin from January 26 to February 3, and read the life of Saint Hadelin.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Hadelin of Celles

This novena is inspired by the life of Saint Hadelin, a monk from Aquitaine, disciple of Saint Remaclus and hermit of Celles. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, February 3, begin on January 26. 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 Hadelin, pray for us." The small act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A son of Aquitaine

Hadelin was born in Aquitaine, far from the Meuse valley where he would die. God led him step by step.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the road by which you have led me here.

Act of the day: Look back on your life and thank God for three important stages.

Day 2: A monk at Solignac

At Solignac, Hadelin learned the rule, common prayer and work. He let himself be formed.

Prayer: Lord, make me receptive to your word and to those who hand it on to me.

Act of the day: Read a passage of the Gospel slowly.

Day 3: Following a master

Hadelin followed Saint Remaclus to Austrasia. He knew that no one grows alone in faith.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for those who have guided me. Give me a good spiritual guide.

Act of the day: Pray for a priest or someone who has helped you in your faith.

Day 4: The call of silence

On the advice of Remaclus, Hadelin withdrew to a cell on the bank of the Lesse. God speaks in silence.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to keep silence so that I may listen to you.

Act of the day: Take a quarter of an hour of silence, without screens or noise.

Day 5: A wooded valley

The valley of the Lesse was a secluded place. Creation itself can lead us to prayer.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to the beauty of your creation.

Act of the day: Take a short walk, thanking God for what you see.

Day 6: Disciples arrive

Hadelin's solitude drew disciples. A life given to God always draws others.

Prayer: Lord, let my life make others want to know you.

Act of the day: Bear simple witness to your faith with someone close to you.

Day 7: Evangelizing the countryside

Hadelin's disciples proclaimed the Gospel in the surrounding villages. Prayer extends into mission.

Prayer: Lord, bless those who proclaim your word in the countryside and in small parishes.

Act of the day: Pray for a rural parish or for a priest who serves many villages.

Day 8: Dying among his brothers

Hadelin died around 690, surrounded by his disciples. His community went on praying at his tomb.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to live and die in your peace, surrounded by brothers and sisters.

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

Day 9: A shrine carried in procession

For centuries his relics have been venerated, and his shrine is carried every year through the streets of Visé. The memory of the saints gathers a people together.

Prayer: Lord, through the intercession of Saint Hadelin, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass, or a procession in your area.

Living the novena with Saint Hadelin

Hadelin teaches us that silence with God bears fruit for others. During these nine days, you can carry those who seek God, religious communities and the people of the Meuse region. If you can, visit the collegiate church of Celles or his shrine in Visé.

Closing prayer

Saint Hadelin,
faithful disciple and hermit of the Lesse,
you found God in silence
and gave birth to a community of prayer.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you,
and obtain for me a peaceful and fruitful heart.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

PILGRIMAGE

Collegiate Church of Saint-Hadelin, Celles

The collegiate church of Saint-Hadelin stands in the heart of the village of Celles, in the municipality of Houyet, in the province of Namur (Belgium), not far from Dinant. It rises on the spot where, according to tradition, Saint Hadelin, a monk from Aquitaine and disciple of Saint Remaclus, set up his hermitage in the 7th century. Built in the 11th century, it is one of the finest examples of Mosan architecture of that period.

From Saint Hadelin's oratory to the collegiate church

According to tradition, Hadelin founded a first oratory at the bottom of the valley of the Lesse around 670. After his death, around 690, a chapter of twelve canons settled at his tomb to pray there: this is what gives the church the title of collegiate church. Around 1030-1040, the canons began building the present church, close in style to the former abbey church of Hastière. In 1046, Bishop Wazo of Liège had a shrine made for the saint's relics.

In 1338, the canons left Celles to settle at Visé, taking the shrine with them. The church then lost its importance and fell into relative neglect. This decline had an unexpected result: its medieval layout remained almost intact until the 19th century. The funerary chapel of the Beaufort family was then added, between 1857 and 1859, followed by a Romanesque Revival sacristy in 1905.

What you can see

The building is striking for the sobriety of its volumes, dominated by a powerful, almost defensive west tower. The outer walls are punctuated by blind arcades and pilaster strips. Inside, the church follows a basilican plan

with three aisles of five bays, under an exposed timber roof. The choir, with a half-dome vault, rises above a large crypt intended for burials and for welcoming pilgrims. A second crypt, under the tower, remodeled around 1590-1591, keeps in its east wall a niche intended for a shrine. Note also the old choir stalls and the 14th-century baptismal font. The collegiate church is listed as exceptional heritage of Wallonia.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Hadelin. In the crypt, where the saint was once venerated, entrust to him those who seek God in silence, then say the prayer to Saint Hadelin. To complete the pilgrimage, you can go to Visé, where his shrine is kept in the church of Saint-Martin. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Practical information

Celles is a village in the valley of the Lesse, a few kilometers from Dinant, and can be reached by car. The collegiate church is a parish church: modest dress and silence are requested, especially during services. Opening and visiting hours may vary by season: check with the parish or the tourist office of the Dinant area before you come.

Credits and sources

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