BOOKLET TO PRINT

# Saint Herodion

*Life, prayer and novena*

Feast day: April 8

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IN BRIEF

## Saint Herodion

*Christian of Rome greeted by Saint Paul, bishop of Patras and martyr according to tradition.*

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| **Feast day** | April 8 |
| **Born** | 1st century |
| **Died** | 1st century, a martyr according to tradition, Patras (Greece), according to tradition |
| **Canonized** | immemorial cult |
| **Era** | 1st century |

## In this booklet


Life

Prayer to Saint Herodion for Our Families

Novena to Saint Herodion

Credits and sources



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LIFE

# Saint Herodion

Saint Herodion was a Christian of Rome in the 1st century, whom Saint Paul greets as his "kinsman" in the Letter to the Romans. According to tradition, he was one of the seventy disciples sent out by Jesus, became bishop of Patras, in Greece, and died a martyr. Very little is known for certain about him. The Catholic Church celebrates him on April 8, together with other disciples named by Saint Paul.

## Who was Saint Herodion?

Herodion, also called Rhodion in some Greek traditions, belongs to the very first generation of Christians. The only ancient text that names him is Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans, written in the mid-50s. Everything else comes from later traditions, mostly Eastern, which sought to link the people greeted by Paul to the group of the seventy disciples and to assign them Churches to govern. We must therefore distinguish what Scripture says from what tradition adds, while recognizing that the memory of these first witnesses has been respectfully kept for centuries.

## Key dates in the life of Herodion

- **1st century**: According to tradition, he is one of the seventy disciples sent out by Jesus to proclaim the Gospel.
- **c. 54 - 58**: A member of the Christian community in Rome, he is greeted by Saint Paul: "Greet my kinsman Herodion" (Romans 16:11).
- **Then**: According to tradition, he becomes bishop of Patras, in the Peloponnese.
- **1st century**: He dies a martyr, according to tradition.

- **Late 10th century**: The Menologion of Basil II, a Byzantine manuscript, depicts him among a group of martyred disciples.

## The kinsman of Saint Paul

At the end of his Letter to the Romans, Saint Paul greets many Christians in Rome. Right after "those who belong to the household of Aristobulus", he writes: "Greet my kinsman Herodion." The word used can mean a relative in the broad sense, or simply a fellow Jew. The name Herodion is formed from that of Herod. For the biblical scholar André-Marie Gerard, it might indicate a freedman of Herod's family; the historian Marie-Françoise Baslez sees in it the sign of a link with the descendants of Herod the Great, like that of a man raised near a prince of this dynasty, in a subordinate position. These hypotheses shed light on the setting in which the Christian faith first spread in Rome: Jewish households, servants, freedmen.

## Bishop of Patras according to tradition

Tradition, especially Greek tradition, counts Herodion among the seventy disciples mentioned in the Gospel according to Saint Luke. It then makes him bishop of Patras, the city in the Peloponnese where, according to tradition, the apostle Andrew was crucified. He is said to have died a martyr. No contemporary document allows us to verify these claims, and Eastern accounts vary on the circumstances of his death. Yet it would be unfair to reject them outright: they express the conviction that Paul's companions continued, after him, to proclaim the Gospel and to give their lives for Christ.

## Devotion

In the Catholic Church, Saint Herodion is celebrated on April 8, together with other disciples of the first generation: Agabus, Rufus, Phlegon and Hermas, who are also named in Saint Paul's writings or in the Acts of the

Apostles. The Orthodox Churches commemorate him on April 8, on November 10, and on January 4 with all of the seventy disciples. In Byzantine art, he is shown with other martyrs of the first century, as in the Menologion of Basil II.

## What can we learn from Saint Herodion?

Herodion is only a name in a letter of Saint Paul. But this name says a great deal: the Apostle remembered him, called him his kinsman, and the Church has never forgotten him. He reminds us that faith is handed on through personal, family and fraternal bonds. You can pray to him for families, for the Christians of Greece and for all who serve the Church without being known.

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

## Where to pray to Saint Herodion

- **Patras** (Greece): the city of which tradition makes him bishop.
- **Anywhere**, especially on April 8, by rereading chapter 16 of the Letter to the Romans.

PRAYER

# Prayer to Saint Herodion for Our Families

Saint Herodion, a Christian of Rome whom Saint Paul greets as his kinsman, is honored by tradition as bishop of Patras and martyr. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him our families, the Christians of Greece and all who serve the Church in humility.

## Prayer to Saint Herodion

*Saint Herodion,*
*you whom the apostle Paul called his kinsman,*
*you received the faith in the young Church of Rome*
*and carried it, according to tradition,*
*as far as the city of Patras.*
*Keep me faithful to the faith of the apostles.*

*You whose name remains written*
*in the Apostle's greetings,*
*teach me to pray for those I love*
*and never to forget my brothers and sisters in the faith.*

*Witness to Christ to the point of giving your life,*
*give us the courage to live the Gospel*
*in the midst of trials,*
*and watch over the Church in Greece and over our families.*
*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## When to pray to Saint Herodion

- On his feast day, April 8.
- For the members of your family, whether close to or far from the faith.
- For the Christians of Greece and for unity between Catholics and Orthodox.
- For persecuted Christians.
- While reading Saint Paul's greetings at the end of the Letter to the Romans.

## A prayer for our loved ones

> *Lord, keep in your peace those who are dear to me.*
> *Saint Herodion, pray for them. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Herodion from March 31 to April 8, and discover the life of Saint Herodion.

NOVENA

# Novena to Saint Herodion

This novena is inspired by the figure of Saint Herodion, a Christian of Rome greeted by Saint Paul, bishop of Patras and martyr according to tradition. 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 8, begin on March 31. 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 Herodion, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely. His life is very little known: these meditations start from Scripture and tradition.

## Day 1: Called by Christ

Tradition counts Herodion among the seventy disciples sent out by Jesus. Every Christian is called by name to follow Christ.

**Prayer:** Lord, you call me too. Help me to answer you with joy.

**Act of the day:** Reread the sending of the disciples in Luke 10:1-9.

## Day 2: A kinsman of Paul

Paul calls Herodion "my kinsman". Faith often passes through family ties, but it also creates a new family.

**Prayer:** Lord, bless my family, and make the Church my family in faith.

**Act of the day:** Pray for a member of your family who is far from the faith.

## Day 3: The Church of Rome

Herodion lived in the young Christian community of Rome, made up of Jews and Gentiles, masters and servants.

**Prayer:** Lord, make our communities places where everyone finds a place.

**Act of the day:** Approach someone in your parish whom you do not know.

## Day 4: A name that comes from Herod

The name Herodion recalls the family of Herod, who had persecuted Jesus. In Christ, no origin is an obstacle to holiness.

**Prayer:** Lord, free me from prejudice, and teach me to see everyone as your child.

**Act of the day:** Let go of a hasty judgment about someone.

## Day 5: Greeted by the Apostle

Paul does not forget Herodion in his letter. To remember others in prayer is already to love them.

**Prayer:** Lord, I entrust to you those I too often forget.

**Act of the day:** Send a message to someone you have not been in touch with for a long time.

## Day 6: Sent to Greece

According to tradition, Herodion became bishop of Patras. He left Rome to serve another Church.

**Prayer:** Lord, make me available to serve wherever you send me.

**Act of the day:** Pray for the Christians of Greece.

## Day 7: In the footsteps of Andrew

Patras is the city where, according to tradition, the apostle Andrew gave his life. Herodion continued the work of the apostles there.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to continue faithfully what others began before me.

**Act of the day:** Thank God for those who handed on the faith to you.

## Day 8: The witness of blood

Tradition reports that Herodion died a martyr. Martyrdom is the supreme witness of love for Christ.

**Prayer:** Lord, sustain those who suffer today for your name, and strengthen my faith.

**Act of the day:** Pray for persecuted Christians.

## Day 9: The unity of Christians

Herodion is celebrated by Catholics and by Orthodox. The saints of the first centuries belong to the whole Church.

**Prayer:** Lord, gather your disciples in unity. Through the intercession of Saint Herodion, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

**Act of the day:** Pray for Christian unity and, if possible, attend Mass.

## Living the novena with Saint Herodion

Herodion reminds us that the first Christians were real people, united by ties of family and friendship. During these nine days, you can carry your family, the Christians of Greece, persecuted believers and the unity of the Church.

## Closing prayer

*Saint Herodion,*
*kinsman of the apostle Paul and witness to Christ,*
*you kept the faith to the end.*
*Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
*Watch over my family and over the Church,*
*and keep us united in Christ.*
*Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

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