

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Homobonus of Cremona

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: November 13

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IN BRIEF

Saint Homobonus of Cremona

Merchant and tailor of Cremona, married layman canonized in 1199, patron saint of tailors and merchants.

Feast day	November 13
Born	12th century, Cremona, Italy
Died	November 13, 1197, Cremona, Italy
Canonized	January 12, 1199, by Pope Innocent III
Era	12th century
Patron saint of	Cremona, tailors, clothworkers, merchants, business people

In this booklet

Life

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Novena to Saint Homobonus

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Homobonus of Cremona

Saint Homobonus of Cremona, Omobono in Italian, was a cloth merchant and tailor of Cremona, in Lombardy, who died in 1197. A married layman, he made his trade a place of honesty and charity, so much so that his fellow citizens called him "father of the poor." Pope Innocent III canonized him in 1199, less than two years after his death, making him one of the first lay people of non-noble birth recognized as saints in the Middle Ages. Patron saint of Cremona, tailors and merchants, he is celebrated on November 13.

Who was Saint Homobonus?

Homobonus was born in the 12th century in Cremona into a family of merchants. His real family name is thought to have been Tucenghi; "Homobonus," or "Omobono," is a nickname meaning roughly "the good man." He inherited a thriving cloth business and a tailor's workshop from his father. He married a woman from his town and led the life of a prosperous craftsman in a Lombard city that was then booming economically.

What we know about him comes mainly from the bull of canonization of Innocent III and from a *Life* written shortly after his death, studied closely by the French historian André Vauchez. These texts show a man who was ordinary in his station in life, but extraordinary in his daily faithfulness to the Gospel.

Key dates

- **12th century**: Born in Cremona into a family of merchants.
- **Adulthood**: Takes over his father's cloth business and marries.
- **Afterward**: A life of prayer, honesty in business and generous almsgiving; he works for peace in his city.

- **November 13, 1197**: Dies during Mass, lying prostrate before the crucifix of the church of Saint Giles in Cremona.
- **January 12, 1199**: Canonized by Pope Innocent III, at the request of the bishop and people of Cremona.

An honest merchant

In the 12th century, money was circulating more and more in Italian cities, and the Church was often wary of merchants, suspected of cheating and usury. Homobonus showed that one could do business without betraying the Gospel. He practiced his trade with scrupulous honesty, refused to deceive anyone about the quality or price of his cloth, and believed that God had given him his work so that he could help those in need.

He gave generously to the poor, so much that, according to his *Life*, his wife sometimes reproached him, worried about the family's future. He visited the sick, welcomed the destitute into his home and cared for orphans. Tradition tells several wondrous stories of bread or wine multiplied for the poor, which can be read as signs of the people's gratitude for his generosity.

A man of prayer and peace

Every day, Homobonus went to the night office and to Mass. He prayed for long periods lying prostrate before the crucifix in the church of Saint Giles, near his home. He was also involved in the life of his city. Cremona was then torn by rivalries between factions, and Homobonus tried to reconcile opponents, which earned him the title "man of peace." He was also careful to defend the Catholic faith against the heretical movements then spreading in Lombardy.

A death during Mass

On November 13, 1197, Homobonus attended Mass at Saint Giles as he did every day. At the Gloria, he stretched out with his arms in the form of a cross before the crucifix, as was his habit. When he did not rise for the Gospel, people realized he had died.

The people of Cremona, struck by his life and by the healings attributed to his intercession, immediately asked for his canonization, supported by their bishop, Sicard. Pope Innocent III canonized him on January 12, 1199. In the bull of canonization, the pope set out what the Church looks for in order to recognize a saint: virtue in life and signs after death. The choice of a simple merchant, married and a layman, was remarkable at the time. It showed that holiness is not reserved for monks and bishops.

Why is Saint Homobonus the patron saint of tailors and merchants?

Homobonus was himself a cloth merchant and tailor, and he lived his trade as a service to God and neighbor. His cult spread quickly. He became patron of Cremona, together with Saint Himerius, and patron of tailors, clothworkers and merchants. Tailors' guilds adopted him throughout Europe. In Venice, the Scuola dei Sartori, the tailors' confraternity, was dedicated to him. In Rome, the church of Sant'Omobono, near the Capitoline Hill, bears his name.

In 1997, for the eighth centenary of his death, Pope John Paul II wrote to the bishop of Cremona that his figure continued to live in the memory and heart of the Church and of the city. Today he is also invoked by business people and by those looking for work.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Homobonus in art

- **Medieval merchant's clothing**: he appears as a well-dressed layman, not as a monk or cleric.

- **Alms for the poor**: he is often shown giving bread or coins to beggars.
- **A blessing gesture**: on the Tailors' Guild House on the Grand Place in Brussels, his gilded statue has stood since 1697 with an outstretched arm in blessing.

What can we learn from Saint Homobonus?

Homobonus is a saint for those who work in trade, crafts and business. He reminds us that honesty, generosity and prayer can transform an ordinary working life. Married, a father according to some sources, involved in the life of his city, he shows a lay holiness lived in the heart of the world. Christians can pray to him for shopkeepers, craftsmen, business owners, and all who want to work with justice.

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

Where to pray to Saint Homobonus

- **Cremona** (Italy): the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Assumption, whose crypt keeps his relics.
- **Cremona**: the church of Saint Giles, now Sant'Omobono, where he died.
- **Rome**: the church of Sant'Omobono, near the Capitoline Hill.
- **Brussels** (Belgium): the Tailors' Guild House on the Grand Place, crowned by his statue.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Homobonus for Work and Business

Modern prayers to Saint Homobonus can be found online, particularly in the United States, but no ancient traditional prayer to him is widely known. Below is an original prayer inspired by his life: honesty at work, generosity toward the poor, daily prayer and concern for peace.

The merchant who was "father of the poor"

Homobonus was a merchant like many others, but he lived his trade as a service. He cheated no one, gave generously, prayed every day before the crucifix and tried to reconcile his fellow citizens. Pope Innocent III canonized him to show that holiness is possible in the midst of work and family life.

Prayer to Saint Homobonus for honest work

Saint Homobonus, you served God in your business and your family: pray for me.

Teach me to work honestly, never to cheat, and to respect my customers, my colleagues and those who depend on me.

You saw your work as a way to help the poor: open my heart and my hand to those who lack what they need.

You prayed every day before the crucifix: help me to entrust to God my working days, my money worries and my plans.

You were a man of peace: help me to calm conflicts at work and in my family. Bless merchants, craftsmen, tailors and all who are looking for a job. I entrust my intention to you: (name it in silence). Amen.

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia, free to use for personal and community prayer.

When to pray this prayer

Saint Homobonus is celebrated on November 13, the day of his death in 1197. You can also pray to him:

- when starting a new job or opening a business;
- before an important business decision;
- for someone who is looking for work;
- when you are tempted to cut corners or be dishonest at work.

A short prayer for job seekers

> *Saint Homobonus, good man of Cremona, help me find honest work where I can serve others and provide for those I love. Amen.*

To know him better, read the life of Saint Homobonus of Cremona, or pray the novena to Saint Homobonus.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Homobonus

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Homobonus of Cremona. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on the eve of his feast on November 13, begin on November 4; it ends on November 12. It can also be prayed at any time, for example when looking for a job or starting a business.

How to pray this novena

Each day, entrust your intention to God, read the short meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. The suggested act helps carry the prayer into daily life.

This novena is well suited to shopkeepers, craftsmen, tailors and business owners, to employees who want to live their faith at work, to people looking for a job, and to couples and families who want to grow in generosity.

Homobonus was neither a monk nor a priest, but a layman with a shop, a workshop, a wife and a city to care about. His novena is a chance to bring God into the places where we spend most of our hours: the office, the store, the workshop, the kitchen table where bills are paid. You can pray it alone, with your spouse, or with colleagues who share your faith.

Day 1: The good man

His fellow citizens gave him the nickname Homobonus, "the good man." It is a simple title, but a beautiful one. Goodness is not reserved for heroes: it is built in daily choices, in a word, a gesture, a way of treating others.

Prayer: Lord, make me good, as you are good, in the small things of each day.

Today: Do one act of kindness for someone who does not expect it.

Day 2: Receiving one's work from God

Homobonus inherited his father's business. He saw his work not only as a way to earn a living, but as a gift from God that allowed him to help others. Every job, however modest, can become a way of serving.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for my work, or help me to find work. Let it be a service to others.

Today: Offer your day's work to God at the start of the day.

Day 3: Honest in business

Homobonus refused to deceive anyone about the quality or price of his cloth. In a time when merchants were often suspected of cheating, he showed that honesty and trade can go together.

Prayer: Lord, keep me honest in all my dealings, even when no one is watching.

Today: Correct a small error in your favor, or keep your word on something you promised.

Day 4: Father of the poor

He gave so generously that his neighbors called him "father of the poor." He welcomed the destitute into his home, visited the sick and cared for orphans. Wealth received from God was, for him, meant to be shared.

Prayer: Lord, open my heart and my hand to those in need.

Today: Give something concrete to a person or a charity that helps the poor.

Day 5: Generosity in marriage

According to his *Life*, his wife sometimes reproached him for giving too much, worried about the family's future. Married life brings its own tensions about money and priorities. Holiness grows there too, through dialogue, patience and trust.

Prayer: Lord, bless married couples, and help them agree in generosity and trust.

Today: Talk peacefully with your spouse or family about how you can help others together.

Day 6: Prayer before the crucifix

Every day, Homobonus went to Mass and prayed long before the crucifix of Saint Giles. His busy working life did not keep him from prayer: it was nourished by it.

Prayer: Jesus crucified, draw me to you, and let my work flow from my prayer.

Today: Spend a few minutes before a crucifix, at home or in a church.

Day 7: A man of peace

Cremona was torn by rivalries between factions, and Homobonus tried to reconcile opponents. Every workplace and every family has its conflicts. Peacemakers are blessed, Jesus said.

Prayer: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace at work and at home.

Today: Take a step toward reconciliation with someone you are in conflict with.

Day 8: Holiness in ordinary life

Pope Innocent III canonized Homobonus less than two years after his death. He was a layman, married, a merchant, with no title or office. His canonization showed that holiness is not reserved for monks and bishops, but is offered to everyone in their daily life.

Prayer: Lord, I believe you are calling me to holiness where I am. Help me to answer.

Today: Do your ordinary tasks with love, as an offering to God.

Day 9: Dying in God's presence

On November 13, 1197, Homobonus died during Mass, lying with his arms outstretched before the crucifix, as he did every day. He died as he had lived: in prayer, close to Christ.

Prayer: Lord, at the end of this novena, I place my intention in your hands. Through the intercession of Saint Homobonus, let me live and die close to you. Amen.

Today: Attend Mass, if you can, or pray for those who are dying today.

Closing prayer

Saint Homobonus, good man of Cremona, father of the poor and man of peace, I entrust to you the intention of these nine days. Pray for merchants, craftsmen and tailors, for all who work and for those who are looking for work. Obtain for me an honest heart, a generous hand and a life rooted in prayer. Amen.

To go further: the life of Saint Homobonus and the prayer to Saint Homobonus.

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