BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Houardon

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: November 19

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IN BRIEF

Saint Houardon

Monk from the island of Britain, Bishop of Léon and patron of Landerneau according to tradition.

Feast day	November 19
Born	6th century (island of Britain), island of Britain, according to tradition
Died	6th or 7th century, Léon (Brittany)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Patron saint of	Landerneau, La Feuillée, sailors

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Houardon for Sailors, Priests and Landerneau

Novena to Saint Houardon

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Houardon

Saint Houardon is a Breton saint of the early Middle Ages, honored as Bishop of Léon and as patron of the town of Landerneau, in Finistère. A monk from the island of Britain according to tradition, he is said to have ordained Saint Hervé a priest in the 6th century. His life is poorly known and mixed with legend, so much so that some historians consider him more or less mythical. His feast day is November 19.

Who was Saint Houardon?

Houardon belongs to the group of founding saints of Brittany, those monks from Britain who gave their names to so many Armorican parishes. He is known to us only through local traditions, which place him in Léon, in the northwest of the peninsula, and count him among the bishops of that diocese. No ancient document allows us to fix his dates: he is placed in the 6th century, sometimes the 7th. What follows should therefore be read as the account handed down by tradition, without claiming to guarantee every detail.

His cult, on the other hand, is quite real: for centuries he has been the patron of Landerneau, one of whose churches bears his name, and he is honored in several parishes of Finistère and Côtes-d'Armor.

Key dates in the life of Houardon

- **6th century**: A monk from the island of Britain, he lands in Armorica north of present-day Plouescat, according to tradition.
- **Shortly after**: He sets up a first hermitage at Landerne-Vihan, in Plouescat.
- **Then**: He passes through the former Gallo-Roman city of Kérilien, in Plounéventer, and reaches the site of Landerneau.

- **At Landerneau**: He founds a monastic settlement, not far from the hermitage of Saint Conogan.
- **Uncertain date**: Having become Bishop of Léon, he ordains Saint Hervé a priest, according to tradition.
- **6th century**: With Hervé, he takes part in the synod of Menez-Bré, where Count Conomor is condemned.
- **November 19**: The day on which he is commemorated.

From the shore of Plouescat to Landerneau

Tradition says that Houardon crossed the sea from insular Britain and landed on the north coast of Léon, near present-day Plouescat. He first lived there as a hermit, at a place called Landerne-Vihan. Then he set off southward, passed through Kérilien, in Plounéventer, where the old Gallo-Roman city of Vorganium stood, and went down to the crossing of the Élorn. That is where the Léon side of Landerneau later grew up, the town of which he became patron. He set up a small monastery there, not far from the hermitage of Saint Conogan, at Beuzit-Conogan.

The Bishop of Léon and Saint Hervé

As Bishop of Léon, Houardon is linked in tradition to Saint Hervé, the famous blind singer and Breton hermit. It was he who is said to have ordained him. The two men are said to have taken part together in the synod held on the Menez-Bré, a hill in Côtes-d'Armor, where the bishops and saints of Brittany condemned Conomor, a count of Poher whom legend turned into a bloodthirsty tyrant. Like Hervé, Houardon was known for the intensity of his prayer, which, it was said, led him to visions of heaven.

Devotion and art

At Landerneau, he is shown sailing on the sea in a stone trough, a common motif in the legends of Breton saints who came from across the Channel. For this reason, sailors readily pray to him. The church of Saint-Houardon also keeps a depiction of the saint by the Breton painter Yan' Dargent. He is the patron of the parish of Landerneau, and an old fountain in the town is said to have been dedicated to him.

Elsewhere, his memory remains present: the chapel of Lanhouardon, at Plabennec, is dedicated to him; Plounéventer had a village called Saint-Houardon; he is the patron of the parish of La Feuillée, in the Monts d'Arrée, where his statue stands in the church; at Camlez, in the Trégor, there were once a chapel and a fountain of Saint Houardon. The Scouts et Guides de France group of Landerneau has chosen him as its patron.

What can we learn from Saint Houardon?

Even though his story is poorly known, Saint Houardon recalls the great adventure of the monks from overseas who planted the faith in the Breton countryside. We remember him as a man of prayer, a pastor who passed on the priesthood to Saint Hervé, and a bishop committed to justice in the face of the powerful. You can pray to him for sailors, for the town of Landerneau and Léon, for priests and for young people, especially the scouts who have taken him as their patron.

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

Where to pray to Saint Houardon

- **Church of Saint-Houardon in Landerneau** (Finistère): the church of the town of which he is patron.

- **Chapel of Lanhouardon**, at Plabennec (Finistère): a chapel dedicated to him.
- **Church of La Feuillée** (Finistère): the parish of which he is patron, where his statue stands.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Houardon for Sailors, Priests and Landerneau

Saint Houardon, a monk from the island of Britain, is honored as Bishop of Léon and patron of Landerneau. According to tradition, he ordained Saint Hervé a priest. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him sailors, priests, young people and the Landerneau area.

Prayer to Saint Houardon

Saint Houardon,
you who crossed the sea
to bring Christ to Armorica,
give me the courage to leave my securities
when God calls me further.

Man of prayer and shepherd of Léon,
you laid hands on Saint Hervé
and defended justice before the powerful.
Watch over our priests and those preparing to become priests,
and give us a taste for prayer.

Protect sailors and their families,
bless Landerneau and all the parishes that honor you,
and guide young people on the path of the Gospel.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Houardon

- On his feast day, November 19.
- For sailors, fishermen and those who travel by sea.
- For priests and vocations in the diocese of Quimper and Léon.
- For scouts and youth movements.
- When you must stand up for someone treated unjustly.

A short invocation

> *Saint Houardon, patron of Landerneau,*
> *keep us in prayer and faithfulness. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Houardon from November 11 to November 19, and read the life of Saint Houardon.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Houardon

This novena walks with Saint Houardon, a monk from the island of Britain, Bishop of Léon and patron of Landerneau according to tradition. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. To finish it on his feast day, November 19, begin on November 11. You can also pray it at any other time of the year.

How to pray this novena

Each day, make 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 Houardon, pray for us." His life is known only through local traditions, mixed with legend.

Day 1: Crossing the sea

Houardon left the island of Britain for Armorica. Like many Breton saints, he trusted God on the sea.

Prayer: Lord, give me the courage to go where you send me.

Act of the day: Pray for missionaries who have left their country.

Day 2: The stone trough

He is depicted sailing in a stone trough. The image says that it was God, and not human strength, that carried him.

Prayer: Lord, when my means are poor, carry me yourself.

Act of the day: Entrust to God a project that seems too big for you.

Day 3: The hermit of the shore

At Plouescat, he first lived as a hermit. Before being a pastor, he was a man of silence.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to take time alone with you.

Act of the day: Take ten minutes of silence and prayer, with nothing else.

Day 4: Setting out

Houardon crossed Léon to the crossing of the Élorn. He did not stay still; he looked for where God was waiting for him.

Prayer: Lord, show me the place and the task you want for me.

Act of the day: Take a walk, even a short one, praying for your town.

Day 5: A neighbor in faith

He settled near the hermitage of Saint Conogan. The Breton saints supported one another.

Prayer: Lord, bless those who share my faith and help us encourage one another.

Act of the day: Encourage a member of your parish with a word or a service.

Day 6: The ordination of Hervé

According to tradition, Houardon ordained Saint Hervé. He passed on what he had received.

Prayer: Lord, bless the priests of your Church and raise up new vocations.

Act of the day: Pray for a priest you know and thank him.

Day 7: Justice before the tyrant

At the synod of Menez-Bré, Houardon and Hervé condemned Conomor. Pastors do not keep silent before injustice.

Prayer: Lord, give me the courage to defend those who are crushed.

Act of the day: Support, with a gift or a prayer, an organization that defends the weakest.

Day 8: The prayer that sees heaven

It was said that his prayer was so intense that it led him to heavenly visions. Prayer opens the heart to God.

Prayer: Lord, make the desire to see you face to face grow in me.

Act of the day: Pray the Our Father slowly, pausing on "thy kingdom come."

Day 9: The patron of a town

Centuries later, Landerneau keeps him as patron and young people take him as a model. The saints watch over those who call on them.

Prayer: Lord, bless Landerneau, Léon and my own town. Through the intercession of Saint Houardon, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass if possible, and pray for the young people of your parish.

Closing prayer

Saint Houardon,
monk who came from the sea and shepherd of Léon,
you prayed for, served and defended the people of God.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you,
and protect those at sea.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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