BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Joseph Oriol

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: March 23

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IN BRIEF

Saint Joseph Oriol

Catalan priest (1650-1702), beneficiary of Santa Maria del Pi in Barcelona, known for his poverty and his charity toward the sick.

Feast day	March 23
Born	November 23, 1650, Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain)
Died	March 23, 1702, Barcelona (Catalonia, Spain)
Canonized	May 20, 1909, by Saint Pius X (beatified on September 5, 1806, by Pius VII)
Era	18th century

In this booklet

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Novena to Saint Joseph Oriol

Santa Maria del Pi, Barcelona

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Joseph Oriol

Saint Joseph Oriol (Josep Oriol in Catalan) was a priest of Barcelona, born in 1650 and died in 1702. Holding a benefice at the parish of Santa Maria del Pi for more than fifteen years, he lived in great poverty, wholly given to prayer, to the poor and to the sick, who came to him in crowds. Canonized by Saint Pius X in 1909, he is celebrated on March 23.

Who was Saint Joseph Oriol?

Joseph Oriol belongs to the line of parish priests whose holiness was lived out in a single neighborhood, serving the same people for years. Born into a modest family in Barcelona, he was able to study thanks to the help of several priests who had noticed his gifts. A doctor of theology, he could have made a career; he chose a life of radical poverty, penance and availability. His contemporaries saw him as a man of God, able to read hearts, and credited him with many healings. The accounts of his life, written with a view to his beatification, insist on these wonders; above all, they show a priest who never left the poor of his city.

Key dates in the life of Joseph Oriol

- **November 23, 1650**: Born in Barcelona, into a modest family.
- **August 1, 1674**: He receives his doctorate in theology at the University of Barcelona.
- **May 30, 1676**: Ordained a priest (some sources give 1675).
- **1686**: Stay in Rome; Pope Innocent XI gives him a benefice at the parish of Santa Maria del Pi, in Barcelona.
- **1698**: He sets out for distant missions, but falls ill in Marseille and has to return to Barcelona.

- **March 23, 1702**: Dies in Barcelona, in his parish.
- **September 5, 1806**: Beatified by Pope Pius VII.
- **May 20, 1909**: Canonized by Pope Saint Pius X.

A poor student who became a doctor

Joseph was born on November 23, 1650, in Barcelona. His family could not afford to pay for his studies, but priests of the city took an interest in this devout and intelligent child and helped him continue his education. He entered the University of Barcelona, where he received his doctorate in theology in 1674. He was ordained a priest in 1676, according to the date most often given. These years of study did not take him away from his roots: all his life he kept a love of simplicity and gratitude toward those who had supported him.

The priest of Santa Maria del Pi

In 1686, Joseph Oriol went to Rome. Pope Innocent XI gave him a benefice at Santa Maria del Pi, one of the great Gothic churches of Barcelona. There he would spend the rest of his life. He lived in a small room under the roof, ate very little, prayed at length and imposed many penances on himself. His example was so striking that some reproached him for drawing his faithful into excessive austerities.

Yet his reputation rested less on these mortifications than on his charity. He taught poor children, visited soldiers to proclaim the Gospel to them, and welcomed those who came to ask for help. His contemporaries spoke of his unshakable faith and hope, and of the care he took of each person. In the beatification homily, Pius VII mentioned the crowds of sick people who came to find him, at certain hours, in a church he named, and the healings that took

place there in the presence of many witnesses. He was also said to have the gift of knowing hidden thoughts and foretelling the future; according to tradition, he predicted the day of his own death.

The missionary stopped at Marseille

Joseph Oriol dreamed of bringing the Gospel to distant lands; some sources mention Japan. In 1698, he set out. But in Marseille, an illness forced him to break off his journey. He returned to Barcelona and understood, according to his biographers after an inner light, that his mission was there: to live among the poor of his city and rekindle their faith. This apparent failure became a call for him. He never again left his parish, where he died on March 23, 1702, at the age of fifty-one.

Devotion and memory in Barcelona

After his death, Joseph Oriol's reputation for holiness only grew in Barcelona. He was beatified by Pius VII on September 5, 1806, then canonized by Saint Pius X on May 20, 1909. His feast is set on March 23, the day of his death. In Barcelona, a square next to Santa Maria del Pi bears his name, and his memory remains attached to that church, where he is venerated. He is shown as a priest in a cassock, often praying or blessing.

What can we learn from Saint Joseph Oriol?

Joseph Oriol founded no famous work and left no important writings. His holiness is that of a priest faithful to one place and one people. He wanted to go to the ends of the earth; God brought him back to his parish, and it was there that he bore fruit. He reminds us that mission often begins at our own door, with the children, the sick and the poor we meet every day. You can pray to him for parish priests, for the sick, and for those whose plans have been broken by illness.

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

Where to pray to Saint Joseph Oriol

- **Santa Maria del Pi** (Barcelona): the church where he served and where his memory is venerated.
- **Plaça de Sant Josep Oriol** (Barcelona): the square next to the church, which bears his name.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Joseph Oriol for the Sick and for Priests

Saint Joseph Oriol, a priest of Barcelona, wanted to go on mission to the ends of the earth; illness stopped him at Marseille, and he came back to serve the poor and the sick of his parish, Santa Maria del Pi, until his death in 1702. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text.

Prayer to Saint Joseph Oriol

Saint Joseph Oriol,
poor child who became a priest,
you chose poverty to be freer
and closer to those who have nothing.
Teach me to live simply
and not to set my heart on things that pass away.

You dreamed of distant missions,
and God brought you back to your parish.
When my plans are broken,
help me to recognize the hidden call
in what seems to me a failure.

You to whom the sick came in crowds,
look upon those who suffer in body and in mind.
Obtain healing for them, if it is God's will,
and always peace and trust.
Bless the priests of our parishes
and keep them faithful to the people entrusted to them.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Joseph Oriol

- On his feast day, March 23.
- For a sick person, before a medical test or an operation.
- For parish priests and for priestly vocations.
- When an illness or an obstacle forces you to give up a plan.
- To learn simplicity and sharing with the poor.

A short invocation

> *Saint Joseph Oriol, friend of the poor and the sick,*
> *pray for us and for all who suffer. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Joseph Oriol from March 15 to March 23, and read the life of Saint Joseph Oriol.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Joseph Oriol

This novena spends nine days with Saint Joseph Oriol, a priest of Barcelona who died in 1702. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, March 23, begin on March 15. You can also pray it at any other time of the year, especially for a sick person.

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 Joseph Oriol, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A child who was helped

Joseph was born into a modest family. He was able to study because priests noticed and supported him. His vocation owed much to the generosity of others.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for those who helped me grow. Make me attentive to the young people I can support in turn.

Act of the day: Encourage a young person in their studies or in their faith.

Day 2: Study in the service of God

A doctor of theology, Joseph did not seek honors. He put his knowledge at the service of prayer and of the little ones.

Prayer: Lord, may my talents serve your glory and the good of my brothers and sisters, and not my pride.

Act of the day: Read and meditate on a few verses of the Gospel.

Day 3: Poverty freely chosen

At Santa Maria del Pi, Joseph lived in a small room under the roof and ate very little. He wanted to be poor in order to be free and available.

Prayer: Lord, free me from what clutters my life and teach me to be content with what is essential.

Act of the day: Give to a charity what you would have spent on something unnecessary.

Day 4: Prayer first

His contemporaries always saw him at prayer. It was in this closeness with God that he drew his strength and gentleness.

Prayer: Lord, give me a thirst for prayer and faithfulness to a daily meeting with you.

Act of the day: Spend ten minutes in silence before God.

Day 5: Children and soldiers

Joseph taught poor children and went to proclaim the Gospel to soldiers. He looked for those whom nobody visited.

Prayer: Lord, send me to those who are forgotten, and give me the words to speak to them of you.

Act of the day: Get in touch with someone who is isolated.

Day 6: A journey cut short

In 1698, Joseph set out for distant missions. In Marseille, illness stopped him. He had to give up and return to Barcelona.

Prayer: Lord, when my plans are broken, help me not to rebel but to seek your will.

Act of the day: Entrust to God a plan that did not work out.

Day 7: Mission at his own door

Back home, Joseph understood that his mission was there, among the poor of his city. He never left his parish again.

Prayer: Lord, open my eyes to the mission you give me where I live.

Act of the day: Do a concrete service for a neighbor.

Day 8: Crowds of the sick

The sick came to him in great numbers, and many healings are reported. Joseph welcomed them all with kindness.

Prayer: Lord, I entrust to you the sick, especially (name them). Give them health if it is your will, and always peace.

Act of the day: Visit or call someone who is ill.

Day 9: A peaceful death

Joseph Oriol died on March 23, 1702, in his parish, surrounded by the affection of his people. According to tradition, he had foretold that day.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to live each day ready to meet you. Through the intercession of Saint Joseph Oriol, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass and pray for the priests of your parish.

Closing prayer

Saint Joseph Oriol,
poor among the poor of Barcelona,
you found your mission where God brought you back.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Watch over the sick and over priests,
and teach me to serve where I am.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

PILGRIMAGE

Santa Maria del Pi, Barcelona

The church of Santa Maria del Pi stands in the heart of Barcelona's Gothic Quarter, on the Plaça del Pi. It is one of the great Gothic churches of the city. Saint Joseph Oriol served there from 1686 until his death in 1702, and his memory remains alive there: he is venerated as the holy priest of the parish.

A great Catalan Gothic church

Santa Maria del Pi is typical of Catalan Gothic: a single, very wide nave without aisles, lined with chapels set between the buttresses. Its plain facade is pierced by a great rose window, one of the largest in Barcelona. An octagonal bell tower dominates the neighborhood. The church suffered a great deal in the 20th century, especially during the civil war, and much of its furnishings and stained glass had to be remade.

The church of Saint Joseph Oriol

In 1686, Pope Innocent XI gave Joseph Oriol a benefice in this church. For more than fifteen years, he prayed there, heard confessions there, and welcomed the poor and the sick who came to ask him for help. He lived there in poverty and never left the parish after his journey to the missions failed in 1698. After his canonization in 1909, his cult naturally became attached to Santa Maria del Pi, where a chapel is dedicated to him. Right next to the church, a small square bears his name: the Plaça de Sant Josep Oriol.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Joseph Oriol. In the church, take a moment of silence near his chapel. Entrust to him the sick you carry in your heart, the priests of your parish and those whose plans have been broken,

then say the prayer to Saint Joseph Oriol. You can also attend Mass in this church where he celebrated for so many years. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Practical information

Santa Maria del Pi is in the old town of Barcelona, a few minutes' walk from the Ramblas and the cathedral. The neighborhood is best explored on foot and is well served by public transport. The church is a place of worship: modest dress and silence are requested, especially during services. Mass times and visiting conditions (some parts of the building, such as the bell tower, may require a paid visit) vary: check with the parish before you come.

Credits and sources

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