BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Kizito

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: June 3

IN BRIEF

Saint Kizito

Young page at the court of Buganda, the youngest of the Catholic martyrs of Uganda, burned alive in 1886.

Feast day	June 3
Born	c. 1872, kingdom of Buganda (Uganda)
Died	June 3, 1886, Namugongo (Uganda)
Canonized	October 18, 1964, by Paul VI
Era	19th century

In this booklet

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Novena to Saint Kizito

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Kizito

Saint Kizito was a young page at the court of King Mwanga II, in the kingdom of Buganda, in the heart of present-day Uganda. Born around 1872 and baptized by Saint Charles Lwanga a few days before his death, he was burned alive at Namugongo on June 3, 1886, at the age of thirteen or fourteen. The youngest of the twenty-two Catholic martyrs of Uganda, canonized by Paul VI in 1964, he is celebrated on June 3 with his companions.

Who was Saint Kizito?

Kizito belonged to the group of pages, the boys and young men who lived in the service of the king of Buganda, within the royal enclosure. It was among them that the Catholic missionaries, the White Fathers of Cardinal Lavigerie who arrived in 1879, had found some of their first catechumens. Kizito was still a child when he discovered the Christian faith through the older pages, especially Charles Lwanga, who was in charge of supervising and protecting them. Few personal details are known about his life, which was very short. But his name has become, in Africa and far beyond, that of the youngest of the Uganda martyrs, the symbol of a child's faith that does not draw back before death.

Key dates in the life of Kizito

- **c. 1872**: Born in the kingdom of Buganda.
- **1880s**: A page at the king's court, he discovers the Christian faith through the Catholic pages.
- **November 15, 1885**: King Mwanga II has Joseph Mukasa, the leader of the Christians at court, executed.

- **Late May 1886**: Knowing death is near, Charles Lwanga baptizes several catechumens, including Kizito.
- **June 3, 1886**: Kizito is burned alive at Namugongo with Charles Lwanga and other companions.
- **June 6, 1920**: Beatified by Benedict XV, with the other Catholic martyrs of Uganda.
- **October 18, 1964**: Canonized by Paul VI in Rome, during the Second Vatican Council.

A child at the king's court

In Buganda, young boys from various families were entrusted to the king and grew up in his service. The court was a place of training, but also a dangerous world, subject to the moods of the sovereign. King Mwanga II, who came to the throne in 1884, at first welcomed the missionaries. Then, under the influence of advisers hostile to foreigners, he turned against the Christians, whom he suspected of disloyalty.

Among the pages, faith spread from one to another: the older ones taught the younger ones and prayed with them. Charles Lwanga, the head of the pages, watched over them with particular care. According to testimonies gathered during the canonization process, one of the causes of the king's anger was the refusal of the young Christians, supported by Lwanga, to give in to his immoral demands. Kizito, one of the youngest, was among those he protected.

Baptism and martyrdom

After the execution of Joseph Mukasa in November 1885, the threat grew clearer. At the end of May 1886, the king demanded that the pages renounce their faith. Those who refused were condemned. Charles Lwanga,

understanding that death was near, baptized those of his companions who were still catechumens. Kizito thus received baptism only a few days before he died.

The condemned were then marched on foot to Namugongo, the traditional place of execution, several miles from the capital. On June 3, 1886, Ascension Day, they were burned alive there. Kizito died with his elders, without denying the Christ he had just received. His martyrdom, like that of his companions, led to many conversions in Uganda.

Devotion and memory

Kizito was beatified by Benedict XV on June 6, 1920 and canonized by Paul VI on October 18, 1964, with Charles Lwanga and the twenty other Catholic martyrs. They are celebrated together on June 3. At Namugongo, the Basilica of the Uganda Martyrs, built on the site of the execution, has twenty-two pillars, one for each martyr; one of them is dedicated to Kizito, and a stained glass window inside depicts him. Every June 3, immense crowds of pilgrims gather there. Churches and schools in Africa bear his name, such as the church of Saint Kizito at Nima, in Accra, Ghana. He is gladly invoked for children and young people.

What can we learn from Saint Kizito?

Kizito shows that there is no age limit for holiness. He received the faith from elders who loved and protected him, he was baptized at the last hour, and he remained faithful to the end. His example invites us to take children's faith seriously, to protect them from all abuse and to surround them with solid witnesses. You can entrust to him children, young people, catechumens and all victims of violence.

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

Where to pray to Saint Kizito

- **Namugongo** (Uganda): the Basilica of the Uganda Martyrs, on the site of his martyrdom.
- **Munyonyo** (Kampala, Uganda): the martyrs' shrine, near the former royal residence where the persecution began.
- **Churches of Saint Kizito** in Africa, such as the one at Nima, in Accra (Ghana).

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Kizito for Children and Young People

Saint Kizito, a young page at the court of Buganda, was baptized by Saint Charles Lwanga before being burned alive at Namugongo on June 3, 1886, at thirteen or fourteen years old. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him children and young people, catechumens and all who need protection.

Prayer to Saint Kizito

Saint Kizito,
youngest of the martyrs of Uganda,
you welcomed the faith with a child's heart
and received baptism on the eve of your death.
Teach me the simplicity and trust
of those who belong to Christ.

Protected by Charles Lwanga,
you refused what wounded your body and soul,
and you remained faithful even in the fire.
Watch over children and young people throughout the world,
keep them from all violence and abuse,
and give them elders who lead them to God.

Pray for catechumens preparing for baptism,
for the Church in Africa and for persecuted Christians.
With all the martyrs of Uganda,
obtain for us a young and courageous faith.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Kizito

- On June 3, the feast of the Uganda Martyrs.
- For a child or young person, especially one in danger.
- For victims of abuse and those who accompany them.
- For a catechumen preparing for baptism.
- For educators, youth leaders and children's catechists.

A short invocation

> *Saint Kizito and holy martyrs of Uganda,*
> *pray for our children and for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Kizito from May 26 to June 3, and read the life of Saint Kizito.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Kizito

Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is inspired by the life of Saint Kizito, the youngest of the Uganda martyrs. To finish it on his feast day, June 3, begin on May 26: you will thus follow the last days of the martyrs, from their condemnation to Namugongo. 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 short meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. End with: "Saint Kizito, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A child of Buganda

Kizito was born around 1872 in the kingdom of Buganda. Like other boys, he was sent to the king's court to serve there. God met him where he lived.

Prayer: Lord, bless children who grow up far from their families. Be their refuge and their strength.

Act of the day: Pray for a child in care, an orphan or a child separated from their family.

Day 2: Faith received from elders

At court, the older pages taught the younger ones prayers and the catechism. That is how Kizito discovered Christ.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for those who handed on the faith to me. Make me a witness for the young.

Act of the day: Share a prayer or a Gospel story with a child.

Day 3: A protecting big brother

Charles Lwanga, head of the pages, watched over Kizito and his companions. He protected them from the king's abuse and encouraged them in the faith.

Prayer: Lord, bless those who protect children. Give them courage and vigilance.

Act of the day: Pray for educators, parents and all who watch over young people.

Day 4: Saying no to evil

The young Christians refused to give in to the king's immoral demands. Their faithfulness to Christ also meant respect for their bodies.

Prayer: Lord, give me a pure heart and the strength to refuse what harms human dignity.

Act of the day: Pray for victims of abuse and for their healing.

Day 5: Baptism at the last hour

Knowing death was near, Charles Lwanga baptized Kizito and other catechumens. Kizito became a child of God a few days before he died.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the gift of my baptism. Help me live as a child of God.

Act of the day: Find out the date of your baptism and give thanks.

Day 6: The road to Namugongo

The condemned walked to Namugongo. Kizito walked with his elders, united with them in prayer and in trial.

Prayer: Lord, walk with me on hard roads. May I never walk alone.

Act of the day: Take a few steps in prayer, offering a present difficulty.

Day 7: The waiting

At Namugongo, the martyrs waited several days for the pyre to be ready. They prayed together and supported one another.

Prayer: Lord, strengthen those who wait in anguish: the sick, prisoners, the persecuted.

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

Day 8: The fire of Ascension Day

On June 3, 1886, Ascension Day, Kizito was burned alive with his companions. On the day Christ ascended into heaven, he joined him.

Prayer: Lord, sustain persecuted Christians today, especially the youngest.

Act of the day: Pray for the Christians of a country where faith is threatened.

Day 9: The blood of martyrs, seed of Christians

The martyrdom of Kizito and his companions led to many conversions. The Church in Uganda was born of their witness.

Prayer: Lord, make your Church in Africa grow. Through the intercession of Saint Kizito, 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 vocations in Africa.

Closing prayer

Saint Kizito,
child baptized on the eve of martyrdom,
you kept the faith even in the fire.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Protect children and young people,
and give us a simple and courageous faith.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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