BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Lautein

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: November 5

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IN BRIEF

Saint Lautein

Monk of Autun who became a hermit in the Jura, founder of the monasteries of Silèze and Maximiac, who died in 518.

Feast day	November 5
Born	c. 448, Autun (Saône-et-Loire)
Died	November 1, 518, Silèze, today Saint-Lothain (Jura)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century
Patron saint of	Saint-Lothain

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Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Lautein

Saint Lautein, or Lothain (Lautenus in Latin), was a hermit monk of the late 5th and early 6th centuries. Born in Autun around 448 and trained at the abbey of Saint-Symphorien, he withdrew into the forests of the Jura, where he founded two monasteries. He died on November 1, 518, at Silèze, the village that now bears his name, Saint-Lothain, where his tomb and relics are still venerated. His feast day is November 5.

Who was Saint Lautein?

Lautein belongs to the great generation of monks who made the Jura a land of prayer, in the time of the kingdom of the Burgundians. His life is known through an ancient account, handed down and discussed by the historians of the Franche-Comté and taken up in the 19th century by the Petits Bollandistes. This account mixes precise information, names of places and people, with wondrous episodes typical of hagiography. It draws the portrait of a man who sought God in solitude, and who ended up, in spite of himself, as the father of a large community.

Key dates in the life of Lautein

- **c. 448**: Born in Autun, into a family of the senatorial nobility; his childhood friend is Gregory, the future bishop of Langres.
- **c. 475**: At about 27, he enters the abbey of Saint-Symphorien in Autun, led by Abbot Laurence.
- **Shortly after**: With his superior's consent, he goes to live as a hermit in the forests of the Jura, at Silèze.
- **c. 480**: Disciples join him; the monastery of Silèze is born, with a church dedicated to Saint Martin.

- **c. 490**: He founds a second monastery at Maximiac, whose exact location is still debated.
- **c. 501**: At 53, he is ordained a priest by Amantius, bishop of Besançon.
- **Easter 518**: He meets his friend Gregory of Langres one last time at Grozon and tells him of his approaching death.
- **November 1, 518**: Dies at Silèze, in prayer; he is buried in a stone sarcophagus.
- **April 15, 1641**: His relics, hidden during the looting of 1635, are solemnly raised.

From Autun to the wilderness of the Jura

Lautein was born into a noble family of Autun, one of the great cities of Roman Gaul. He attended the same schools as Gregory, the son of a senator, who would become bishop of Langres and great-grandfather of Saint Gregory of Tours. The two friends stood out for their exemplary conduct. Drawn to monastic life, Lautein entered the abbey of Saint-Symphorien in Autun at about 27, probably on the advice of the bishop Saint Euphronius. The monks there followed a rule inspired by the monks of the East.

But Lautein longed for greater solitude. With his abbot's permission, he left the monastery and went deep into the forests of the Jura, at the other end of the Burgundian kingdom. He settled at the foot of the mountains, on a hill called Silèze, near a river and not far from the Roman road linking Lyon to Besançon. There he wanted God alone as his witness.

Father of two monasteries

Lautein's solitude did not last. Men came to place themselves under his guidance, and soon a large community lived around him: this was the first monastery of Silèze, whose church was dedicated to Saint Martin. As vocations

kept coming, he founded a second monastery at Maximiac, where he placed forty monks trained in fasting, prayer and obedience. Historians still debate where this place was.

His biographer stresses his fasts: for three Lents, he ate only twice a week, barley porridge, then dried apples, then raw vegetables. He credits him with the power to calm storms, and tells of several wonders: Brother Pharadeus who, at his command, went into the burning bread oven and came out unharmed; or thieves who came to loot the monastery, stopped when one of them was bitten by a snake, then healed by the saint after they repented.

For a long time Lautein refused the priesthood, judging himself unworthy. Only at 53, around 501, urged by his brothers, was he ordained a priest by Amantius, bishop of Besançon. According to tradition, the church of Saint-Lothain keeps the altar on which he celebrated.

A death foretold

In 518, after spending Lent at Maximiac, Lautein learned that his childhood friend Gregory, bishop of Langres, was passing through the region on his way to the council of Lyon. The two men met in the village of Grozon on Easter Day and spent the day together in prayer. Lautein had received word of his approaching end and confided it to his friend.

He then returned to Silèze and said to the priest Victorius: "That is where I want to die and be buried. Come next Thursday, and bring a shroud." He spent three days in prayer, gave himself Communion and gave up his soul to God in prayer, on November 1, 518.

Devotion and relics

Lautein was buried in a stone sarcophagus, still visible in the crypt of the church, with the inscription: "Here rests Saint Lautein, confessor." Ruined by the Normans at the end of the 9th century, the monastery was restored by Saint Berno, abbot of Baume, and became a priory dependent on that abbey. The relics were exposed for the veneration of the faithful in the 11th century.

On May 11, 1635, during the Ten Years' War in the Franche-Comté, soldiers looted the church and broke the reliquary. The parish priest gathered the bones and hid them under a slab in the choir. They were taken out on April 15, 1641; that day, a blind woman is said to have recovered her sight, which the priest recorded in an official report. Hidden again in 1793, the reliquary escaped the Revolution. For a long time it was brought down in times of drought or endless rain to implore the saint; this custom lasted until 1853. Saint Lautein is invoked against storms and for eyesight.

What can we learn from Saint Lautein?

Lautein wanted to flee the world for God alone, and God entrusted brothers to him. He sought silence, and he became a father. He judged himself unworthy of being a priest, and became one out of obedience. His life speaks of the humility of a man who lets himself be led. His faithful friendship with Gregory of Langres, up to their last Easter meeting, also shows that holiness does not cut human ties. You can pray to him for monks and hermits, for those who seek silence, for spiritual friendships, and against bad weather.

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

Where to pray to Saint Lautein

- **Church of Saint-Lothain** (Jura): the crypt with his Merovingian sarcophagus and the reliquary of his relics.

- **Autun** (Saône-et-Loire): his hometown, where the abbey of Saint-Symphorien stood.
- **Grozon** (Jura): the village where, according to tradition, he met Saint Gregory of Langres one last time.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Lautein for Silence, Friendship and Against Storms

Saint Lautein (or Lothain), a monk of Autun who became a hermit in the Jura, founded two monasteries and died in 518 at Silèze, today Saint-Lothain, where his tomb is still venerated. He was invoked against storms and for eyesight. His feast day is November 5. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him those who seek silence, faithful friendships and the work of the land.

Prayer to Saint Lautein

Saint Lautein,
you left Autun and its schools
to seek God in the silence of the forests of the Jura.
Teach me to keep silence
and to find God in the depths of my heart.

You wanted to live alone with God,
and he gave you brothers to lead.
You judged yourself unworthy to be a priest,
and you obeyed when the Church called you.
Help me to welcome humbly
what God asks of me.

You who kept to the end
the friendship of Saint Gregory,
bless my friendships and make them faithful.
Protect our fields and villages from storms,
give light to those whose eyes are sick,
and prepare us to meet the Lord in peace.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Lautein

- On his feast day, November 5.
- In times of storm, drought or excessive rain, for the harvest.
- For someone who suffers from eye trouble.
- For monks, nuns and those making a retreat.
- For a dear friend, or to prepare for death in peace.

A short invocation

> *Saint Lautein, friend of silence and father of monks,*
> *pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Lautein from October 28 to November 5, and read the life of Saint Lautein.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Lautein

This novena is inspired by the life of Saint Lautein, a monk of Autun who became a hermit and founder of monasteries in the Jura, and who died in 518. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, November 5, begin on October 28. 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 Lautein, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely. The episodes recounted come from an ancient account that mixes history and legend.

Day 1: A childhood friendship

In Autun, Lautein grew up with Gregory, the future bishop of Langres. Their friendship lasted all their lives. God also uses our friends to lead us to him.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for my friends. Make our friendships a path toward you.

Act of the day: Write to or call a longtime friend.

Day 2: The call of the monastery

At about 27, Lautein entered the abbey of Saint-Symphorien. He left a secure life to follow God's call.

Prayer: Lord, give me the courage to answer your calls, even when they upset my plans.

Act of the day: Pray for young people discerning their vocation.

Day 3: The desire for silence

Lautein set out for the forests of the Jura, to have God alone as his witness. Inner silence is a door to God.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to be silent so that I may listen to you.

Act of the day: Take ten minutes of silence, without screens, to pray.

Day 4: Welcoming brothers

Lautein sought solitude, and disciples came. He did not send them away: he became their father.

Prayer: Lord, make me available to those you place on my path, even when they disturb my plans.

Act of the day: Patiently welcome someone who asks something of you.

Day 5: Fasting and prayer

Lautein's biographer tells of his very austere Lents. Fasting frees the heart for God and for others.

Prayer: Lord, free me from what clutters my life, and give me hunger for you.

Act of the day: Go without something unnecessary and give its value to the poor.

Day 6: Humility before the priesthood

For a long time Lautein judged himself unworthy to be a priest. He became one only at 53, out of obedience to his brothers and to the bishop.

Prayer: Lord, bless priests and keep them humble. Give your Church shepherds after your own heart.

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

Day 7: Master of storms

Tradition credits Lautein with the power to calm storms, and his reliquary was brought down to ask for rain or fair weather. God cares for human work.

Prayer: Lord, bless the work of farmers and protect the harvest. Teach us to respect your creation.

Act of the day: Pray for farmers and for those who live from the land.

Day 8: The last meeting

At Easter 518, Lautein saw Gregory again at Grozon. They spent the day in prayer, and Lautein told him he would soon die.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to tell those I love what truly matters, while there is still time.

Act of the day: Tell someone close to you of your affection or gratitude.

Day 9: Dying in prayer

Lautein returned to Silèze, asked that his shroud be prepared, prayed for three days and died in peace on November 1, 518, the feast of All Saints.

Prayer: Lord, through the intercession of Saint Lautein, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will, and let me one day die in your peace.

Act of the day: Pray for the dying and, if possible, attend Mass.

Closing prayer

Saint Lautein,
monk, hermit and father of monks,
you sought God in silence
and served your brothers with humility.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Keep me faithful in friendship and in prayer,
and protect our lands from storms.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

PILGRIMAGE

Church of Saint-Lothain

The church of Saint-Lothain stands above the village of the same name, in the Jura, a few kilometers west of Poligny. It was here, on the hill then called Silèze, that Saint Lautein (or Lothain), a monk from Autun, lived as a hermit, founded a monastery and died on November 1, 518. Its crypt still holds his Merovingian sarcophagus, and the church keeps the reliquary of his relics.

From the monastery of Silèze to the priory of Saint-Lothain

Toward the end of the 5th century, Lautein settled as a hermit at Silèze, at the foot of the Jura mountains. Disciples joined him and formed a large community. After his death, the village took his name. The monastery, ruined by the Normans at the end of the 9th century, was restored by Saint Berno, later the first abbot of Cluny, and became a priory dependent on the abbey of Baume-les-Messieurs.

The present church was built in the 11th and 12th centuries over a crypt from the end of the 10th century. Its vault was rebuilt in the 18th century, and its bell tower, topped with a domed roof typical of the Franche-Comté, bears the date 1716. The church has been listed as a historic monument since 1927, and its crypt has been classified since 1946.

What you can see

The heart of the pilgrimage is the Romanesque crypt, which long served as the original church. There you can see the sarcophagus of Saint Lautein, with its Latin inscription: "Here rests Saint Lautein, confessor." A fresco shows the

death of the saint; over the centuries, villagers and visitors have carved their names on it. A small alabaster shrine is known as the "fountain of miraculous oil": according to legend, the saint used it to anoint the sick.

In the church, the reliquary, which survived the looting of 1635 and the Revolution, contains among other relics a femur and several vertebrae. Other relics are kept in a silver reliquary and in a bust. The church also holds a 15th-century polychrome wooden statue of Saint Lautein, an alabaster high relief of 1526 devoted to Saint Hubert, a reliquary bust of Saint Faith and many old statues.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Lautein. In the crypt, before his tomb, entrust to him your need for silence, your friendships, those with eye trouble and the work of the fields, then say the prayer to Saint Lautein. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Practical information

Saint-Lothain is in the Jura, about 7 kilometers west of Poligny, in the middle of the Jura vineyards; it can be reached by car. The church belongs to the diocese of Saint-Claude. Modest dress and silence are requested, especially in the crypt. Opening hours and service times may vary: check with the parish or the Poligny tourist office before you come.

Credits and sources

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