BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Lupentius (Louvent)

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: October 22

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IN BRIEF

Saint Lupentius (Louvent)

Abbot of Saint-Privat in the Gévaudan, preacher, martyred in Champagne around 584.

Feast day	October 22
Born	c. 537-540, Bois-du-Mont, near Javols (Gévaudan, Lozère)
Died	c. 584 (587 according to other sources), Champagne, near Perthes
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Lupentius for the Courage of Truth

Novena to Saint Lupentius

Church of Saint-Lupien (Aube)

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Lupentius (Louvent)

Saint Lupentius, called Louvent or Lupien in French, was an abbot of the Gévaudan who died a martyr in the 580s. Abbot of the monastery of Saint-Privat, near Mende, he was accused of having criticized Queen Brunhild, cleared himself before the court, and was then murdered on the way home, in Champagne, by men of the count who had prosecuted him. His relics are venerated at Mende and at Saint-Lupien, in the Aube. His feast day is October 22.

Who was Saint Lupentius?

Lupentius lived in the 6th century, in the time of Clovis's grandsons, when the Frankish kingdom was divided among several kings and the great queens Brunhild and Fredegund were at odds. A native of the Gévaudan, today's Lozère, he became a monk and then abbot of a monastery dedicated to Saint Privatus, the martyr of Mende. A priest and preacher, he was not afraid to denounce the misconduct of the powerful. His freedom of speech cost him his life. The Roman Martyrology commemorates him on October 22. The sources give slightly different dates for his death: around 584 according to some, 587 according to others.

Key dates in the life of Lupentius

- **c. 537-540**: Born at a place called Bois-du-Mont, near Javols, in the Gévaudan.
- **c. 564**: He enters the clerical state.
- **Then**: He becomes abbot of the monastery of Saint-Privat, near Mende, and is ordained a priest by Evantius, bishop of the Gévaudan.
- **576**: Bishop Evantius entrusts him with a preaching mission.

- **580s**: Accused by the count of the Gévaudan, Innocent, of having insulted Queen Brunhild, he goes to the court, where he is found innocent.
- **c. 584 (or 587)**: On the way home, he is beheaded in Champagne by the count's men, and his body is thrown into a river.
- **Later**: His relics are moved from the church of Perthes to the cathedral of Châlons.
- **1737**: The bishop of Châlons gives part of his relics to his uncle, the bishop of Mende, who places them in Mende cathedral.

Abbot of Saint-Privat

Lupentius was born shortly before 540, near Javols, the old capital of the Gévaudan. Around 564, he chose the clerical state and entered the monastery dedicated to Saint Privatus, the martyr bishop of the Gévaudan, near Mende. He became its abbot. Bishop Evantius ordained him a priest, and in 576 entrusted him with a preaching mission. Lupentius was thus both a man of prayer, responsible for a community, and a preacher charged with proclaiming the Gospel to the people.

Speaking freely before power

In his preaching, Lupentius denounced the scandals of the court of Austrasia, then dominated by Queen Brunhild. The count of the Gévaudan, Innocent, accused him of having insulted the queen and summoned him to trial. The abbot went to the court to answer for his words. He was found innocent and released. This first outcome shows that his accusers had no real grounds: Lupentius had simply reminded those who governed of the demands of Christian morality.

But his opponents' hatred did not stop there. On the way home, in Champagne, he was seized by the count's men, who beheaded him and threw his body into a river. Like Saint John the Baptist, put to death for reproaching

King Herod for his conduct, Lupentius died for telling the truth to the powerful.

The head brought back by an eagle

A legend grew up around his death. Shepherds are said to have found his body in the river, but without his head. The head was then brought back beside the body by an eagle. This wondrous story expresses the faithful's conviction that God does not abandon his martyrs and watches over their remains. That is why Saint Lupentius is sometimes shown beheaded, as in the 18th century statue in the church of Saint-Lupien.

The cult of Saint Lupentius

The saint is said to have been buried first in the church of Perthes, in Champagne, before his relics were taken to the cathedral of Châlons. In 1737, the bishop of Châlons, Claude-Antoine de Choiseul-Beaupré, gave part of them to his uncle Gabriel-Florent de Choiseul-Beaupré, bishop of Mende: they are still in Mende cathedral, returning the saint to his home diocese. The church of Saint-Lupien, in the Aube, keeps an early medieval sarcophagus said to be his tomb, as well as a relic of his arm.

His name remains attached to many places in Champagne and Lorraine: the village of Saint-Lupien (Aube), Châtelraould-Saint-Louvent (Marne), Doulevant-le-Château and Doulevant-le-Petit (Haute-Marne), as well as churches of Saint-Louvent at Pocancy, Rembercourt-aux-Pots, Brousseval, Longchamp and Chancenay. The diocese of Mende also keeps his memory among its saints.

What can we learn from Saint Lupentius?

Saint Lupentius is a witness to the courage of speech. He denounced the injustice and immorality of the powerful, he stood loyally before his judges, and he was killed even though he had been found innocent. He reminds us that truth has a price, and that a Christian cannot remain silent before evil. You can pray to him for journalists, whistleblowers and all who defend the truth, for priests and preachers, and for victims of unjust accusations.

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

Where to pray to Saint Lupentius

- **Saint-Lupien** (Aube): the church of Saint-Lupien, with the sarcophagus said to be his tomb and a relic of his arm.
- **Mende** (Lozère): the cathedral, which has kept part of his relics since 1737.
- **Châlons-en-Champagne** (Marne): the cathedral where his relics were long kept.
- **Rembercourt-aux-Pots** (Meuse): the church of Saint-Louvent.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Lupentius for the Courage of Truth

Saint Lupentius, or Louvent, abbot of Saint-Privat in the Gévaudan, denounced the misconduct of Queen Brunhild's court. Found innocent, he was nevertheless murdered on the way home, in the 580s. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him those who defend the truth and those who are unjustly accused.

Prayer to Saint Lupentius

Saint Lupentius,
abbot of the Gévaudan and faithful preacher,
you proclaimed the Gospel without fear
and denounced evil, even among the powerful.
Give me the courage to speak the truth
with uprightness and with charity.

Unjustly accused, you stood before your judges
and were found innocent;
yet hatred pursued you to your death.
Watch over those who are wrongly accused,
over those threatened for having spoken,
and keep them in the peace of Christ.

You whose body and memory God kept safe,
teach me to place my life in his hands.
Obtain for me the grace I entrust to you,
if it is according to his will.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Lupentius

- On his feast day, October 22.
- When you need the courage to speak a difficult truth.
- For victims of unjust accusations or slander.
- For priests, preachers and journalists.
- For those threatened because of their faith or their words.

A short invocation

> *Saint Lupentius, witness to the truth,*
> *give us your courage and pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Lupentius from October 14 to October 22, and read the life of Saint Lupentius.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Lupentius

This novena is inspired by the life of Saint Lupentius, or Louvent, abbot of Saint-Privat in the Gévaudan and a martyr of the 6th century. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. To finish it on his feast day, October 22, begin on October 14. 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 Lupentius, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A child of the Gévaudan

Lupentius was born near Javols, in the Gévaudan. It was in this rugged land that he received the faith and later served it.

Prayer: Lord, bless the land where I live and those who live there. Make faith grow there.

Act of the day: Pray for your parish and its priests.

Day 2: Choosing God

Around 564, Lupentius entered the clerical state. He gave his youth and his life to the service of God.

Prayer: Lord, call young people to follow you, and give them generous hearts.

Act of the day: Pray for priestly and religious vocations.

Day 3: Abbot of a community

Lupentius became abbot of the monastery of Saint-Privat. He guided his brothers in prayer and common life.

Prayer: Lord, bless religious communities and those who guide them.

Act of the day: Take a longer time of prayer than usual.

Day 4: Sent to preach

In 576, Bishop Evantius entrusted Lupentius with a preaching mission. The monk became a bearer of the Word for a whole people.

Prayer: Lord, bless those who proclaim your Word, and open our hearts to receive it.

Act of the day: Read the Gospel of the day and keep one sentence from it.

Day 5: Daring to speak the truth

Lupentius denounced the scandals of the court of Austrasia. He did not flatter the powerful: he reminded them of God's law.

Prayer: Lord, give me the courage to speak the truth, with charity and without fear.

Act of the day: Do not hide a necessary truth, but say it gently.

Day 6: Unjustly accused

Count Innocent accused Lupentius of having insulted the queen. The abbot had to face slander.

Prayer: Lord, support those who are wrongly accused, and keep me from judging too quickly.

Act of the day: Refuse to repeat a rumor or a criticism.

Day 7: Before the judges

Lupentius went to the court to answer for his words. He was found innocent. He did not run away: he trusted justice.

Prayer: Lord, bless judges and all who administer justice. Give them upright hearts.

Act of the day: Pray for someone involved in a trial or a conflict.

Day 8: Martyrdom on the road

On the way home, Lupentius was beheaded by the count's men. Like John the Baptist, he died for telling the truth.

Prayer: Lord, support those who are threatened for defending truth and justice.

Act of the day: Pray for journalists and human rights defenders under threat around the world.

Day 9: God keeps his friends

Legend says an eagle brought the saint's head back beside his body. His relics are venerated today at Mende and at Saint-Lupien. God does not forget his witnesses.

Prayer: Lord, keep me faithful to the truth to the end. Through the intercession of Saint Lupentius, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

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

Living the novena with Saint Lupentius

Saint Lupentius teaches us that truth spoken with courage can cost dearly, but that it is a service to all. During these nine days, you can carry victims of slander, preachers, and those who risk their lives for the truth. If you can, visit Mende or Saint-Lupien, where his relics are venerated.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Lupentius,*
> *abbot of the Gévaudan and martyr of the truth,*
> *you spoke without fear before the powerful*
> *and gave your life for justice.*
> *Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *Give me an upright heart and truthful words,*
> *and keep me in the peace of Christ.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

PILGRIMAGE

Church of Saint-Lupien (Aube)

The church of Saint-Lupien stands in the small village of Saint-Lupien, in the Aube, west of Troyes. It is dedicated to Saint Lupentius, called Saint Lupien here, the abbot of the Gévaudan who was put to death in Champagne in the 6th century. It is said to hold his tomb and keeps a relic of his arm. It is the main place to pray to the saint in the region where he gave his life.

A village church full of history

Until the 18th century, the parish belonged to the deanery of Marigny, before being attached to the archpriesthood of Troyes; the parish was in the bishop's gift. The present church was built in several stages, from the 13th to the 16th century, on a Latin cross plan, and it is entirely vaulted. One bay of the transept dates back to the 12th century. The north arm of the transept was demolished in 1810. The building has been listed as a historic monument since May 7, 1926.

The tomb and memories of the saint

The church keeps an early medieval sarcophagus which, according to tradition, is the tomb of Saint Lupentius. A relic of his arm is also kept there, set in a wooden reliquary covered with silver leaf. An 18th century statue shows the saint beheaded, recalling how he died. You can also see a painted altarpiece from the 16th century, as well as traces of a wall painting covered with whitewash.

Saint Lupentius, abbot of the monastery of Saint-Privat near Mende, had been accused of criticizing Queen Brunhild. Found innocent at the court, he was beheaded on his way home by men of the count of the Gévaudan, in the 580s.

Part of his relics was kept at Châlons cathedral, then given in 1737 to Mende cathedral.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Lupentius. Before his tomb, entrust to him people who are unjustly accused and all who have the courage to speak the truth, then say the prayer to Saint Lupentius. October 22, his feast day, is a special time for this pilgrimage. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Practical information

Saint-Lupien is a rural village in the Aube, reachable by car from Troyes. Like many country churches, the church is not necessarily open at all times: check with the town hall or the parish before you come to find out about visiting arrangements and service times. Modest dress and silence are requested in the building.

Credits and sources

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