

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Marinus

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: September 3

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IN BRIEF

Saint Marinus

Stonemason and hermit deacon of Mount Titano, founder of San Marino according to tradition.

Feast day	September 3
Born	Rab, Dalmatia (Croatia)
Died	c. 366, Mount Titano, San Marino
Era	4th century
Patron saint of	San Marino, stonemasons

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Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Marinus

Saint Marinus was a stonemason from Dalmatia who, in the early 4th century, became a hermit and then a deacon on Mount Titano, near Rimini in Italy. According to tradition, the small Christian community that gathered around him was the origin of the Republic of San Marino, which bears his name and venerates him as its founder and patron. His feast day is September 3, which is also the national holiday of San Marino.

Who was Saint Marinus?

What we know of Saint Marinus comes from a *Life* written long after his death and from the living memory of the republic that claims him as its founder. His story should therefore be read as a tradition handed down from generation to generation rather than as a biography in the modern sense. It is nonetheless ancient and consistent.

According to this tradition, Marinus came from the island of Rab (Arbe in Italian), on the Dalmatian coast, in present-day Croatia. A humble stonemason, he left his island with a fellow countryman, Leo, to look for work on the other side of the Adriatic. The two men settled as masons in Rimini, an important Roman city. They were sent to Mount Titano, about twelve miles inland, to quarry and cut stone.

Key dates in the life of Saint Marinus (according to tradition)

- **Late 3rd century**: Leaves the island of Rab for Rimini with his companion Leo.
- **Following years**: Works stone on Mount Titano, then spends twelve years in Rimini, where he proclaims the Gospel.

- **September 3, 301**: The date tradition gives for the birth of the community on Mount Titano.
- **303**: Beginning of the great persecution of Diocletian; Marinus lives as a hermit on the mountain.
- **After 313**: With peace restored to the Church, he is ordained a deacon by the Bishop of Rimini.
- **Around 366**: Dies on Mount Titano, according to tradition.

The workman who preached the Gospel

Tradition describes Marinus as a tireless manual laborer who did not separate his faith from his trade. In Rimini he spent twelve years cutting stone while speaking of Christ to those around him, and many inhabitants were converted.

His companion Leo went his own way to another nearby height, Monte Feltro, where he built a chapel. That place would become the town of San Leo, which still bears his name.

This portrait of a working saint, who evangelized by his example as much as by his words, no doubt explains the affection that the people of the region still have for him. It echoes a very old intuition of the Church: holiness can be lived at the heart of ordinary work.

The hermit of Mount Titano

Even before the persecution of Diocletian, Marinus withdrew to Mount Titano to live in prayer and solitude. He did not remain alone for long. Christians under threat came to join him, and a small community formed around him. The Republic of San Marino regards this community as its origin, and by convention dates its founding to September 3, 301.

The life of the hermit was simple: prayer, manual work and hospitality. Marinus did not seek to found anything; he sought God, and others came because they found him there.

Once peace returned with the edict of Constantine in 313, the Bishop of Rimini ordained Marinus a deacon. He went on serving the community on the mountain until his death, which tradition places in the autumn of 366.

"I leave you free"

A famous saying is attributed to the dying Marinus: *Relinquo vos liberos ab utroque homine*, "I leave you free from both men." According to the usual interpretation, this means free from the authority of both the emperor and the pope.

Whether the words are his or were formulated later, they have deeply shaped the identity of San Marino, which presents itself as one of the oldest republics in the world. The memory of a humble deacon thus stands at the source of a whole people's sense of freedom.

Why is Saint Marinus the patron saint of San Marino?

San Marino takes its very name from him. The republic regards the community he gathered on Mount Titano as its beginning, keeps his relics in its main church and celebrates its national holiday on his feast day. For the people of San Marino, he is at once founder, father and protector.

Beyond his country, Saint Marinus is a saint of ordinary life: a laborer, a man of prayer, a servant of his community. His story reminds us that faith can found a lasting community, and that true freedom is rooted in fidelity to God. He can be invoked for manual workers, for migrants who leave home to find work, for those who hold public responsibility and for communities seeking peace.

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

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Marinus in art

- **The vestments of a deacon**, recalling his ordination by the Bishop of Rimini.
- **Mount Titano with its three towers**, which he sometimes holds in his hand.
- **A gesture of blessing** over the city, as in the painting by Bartolomeo Gennari.
- **Stonemason's tools** may also recall his trade.



The Basilica of Saint Marinus on Mount Titano.

Where to pray to Saint Marinus

- **San Marino**: the Basilica of Saint Marinus (Basilica del Santo), a 19th-century neoclassical church in the old town that keeps his relics, with a large statue of the saint in the choir. Next to it, the small Church of Saint Peter shows two niches cut into the rock, presented by tradition as the "beds" of Marinus and Leo.
- **Rab** (Croatia): his native island, according to tradition.
- **Rimini** (Italy): the city where he worked and proclaimed the Gospel.
- **San Leo** (Italy): the town that grew, according to tradition, from the hermitage of his companion Leo.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Marinus for Work and Freedom

No ancient prayer to Saint Marinus has become widespread beyond his republic, but tradition has kept a saying of his that sums up his legacy. You will find it below with its context, followed by an original prayer to Saint Marinus.

The saying attributed to Saint Marinus

> *"Relinquo vos liberos ab utroque homine." ("I leave you free from both men.")*

Source: words that the tradition of San Marino attributes to the saint at the moment of his death, handed down by his *Life* and by the memory of the republic. They are usually understood as an affirmation of freedom from any outside domination.

Prayer to Saint Marinus for work and freedom

Saint Marinus, you left your island to earn your bread by the work of your hands: pray for all who work hard, and for those who have had to go far from home.

You proclaimed Christ to your fellow workers: teach me to bear witness to my faith simply, where I live and where I work.

You sought God in the silence of the mountain: help me to find a moment of prayer every day.

You welcomed persecuted Christians: make me hospitable to those who seek refuge.

You left your brothers the gift of freedom: obtain for us the grace to use it well, in the service of the common good. I also entrust to you my intention: (name it in silence). Amen.

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia, free to use for personal and community prayer.

When to pray this prayer

Saint Marinus is celebrated on September 3, the day the Republic of San Marino also celebrates its founding; some calendars mention him on September 4. You can pray to him at any time:

- for workers, especially those in construction and manual trades;
- for migrants who leave their country to find work;
- for those who hold public office;
- when you are looking for a job, or starting a new one.

A short prayer before work

> *Lord, like Saint Marinus at his stonecutting, may I do my work today with care and honesty, and may it give you glory. Saint Marinus, pray for us. Amen.*

Continue with the novena to Saint Marinus, or read the life of Saint Marinus.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Marinus

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Marinus as tradition has handed it down. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, September 3, begin on August 26. It is well suited to workers, to migrants and to all who seek to live their faith in daily work, and it can be prayed at any time of the year.

How to pray this novena

Each day, place your intention before God, read the short meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. The suggested act helps carry the prayer into daily life.

You may pray it alone or with others, at home, at church or even at your place of work. If you miss a day, simply continue the next day.



The altar and statue of Saint Marinus in his basilica.

Day 1: Leaving home

Marinus left his island of Rab to look for work across the sea. Like so many migrants today, he knew the uncertainty of a new land. God goes with those who set out, and he knows the name of every person who crosses a border in search of bread.

Prayer: Lord, be with all who have left their homeland to earn their living, and give them a welcome.

Today: Pray for a migrant worker you know, or greet one with kindness.

Day 2: A faithful friend

Marinus did not leave alone: Leo, his fellow countryman, went with him. Friendship in faith is a precious gift. Later each went his own way, but both remained faithful to Christ.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the friends who walk with me. Keep us faithful to you.

Today: Contact a friend you have not spoken to for a long time.

Day 3: The dignity of work

Marinus cut stone with his hands. Christ himself worked as a carpenter in Nazareth. No honest work is too humble to be offered to God. The stone shaped by patient hands can become part of a house, a church or a city.

Prayer: Lord, I offer you my work today. May it be done well and for your glory.

Today: Do one task carefully, offering it to God.

Day 4: Witness on the work site

For twelve years in Rimini, Marinus spoke of Christ to those around him, and many came to believe. His witness was not in sermons but in his life and his words among his fellow workers.

Prayer: Lord, make me a simple and joyful witness to you among my colleagues.

Today: Show kindness to a colleague who is struggling.

Day 5: The silence of the mountain

Marinus withdrew to Mount Titano to pray in solitude. Even a busy worker needs a mountain, a place of silence where God can speak. Prayer is not time stolen from work; it gives work its meaning.

Prayer: Lord, draw me into silence, so that I may hear your voice.

Today: Turn off your phone for half an hour and pray.

Day 6: A place of refuge

When persecution came, Christians in danger joined Marinus on the mountain. His hermitage became a refuge. Our homes and parishes can also be places of welcome for those who are threatened.

Prayer: Lord, open my heart and my home to those who need refuge.

Today: Support an organization that welcomes refugees.

Day 7: Serving as a deacon

When peace returned, the Bishop of Rimini ordained Marinus a deacon. A deacon is a servant. Marinus spent the rest of his life serving the small community that had gathered around him, without seeking honor or power.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, who came to serve and not to be served, teach me to serve.

Today: Perform a hidden service for someone at home.

Day 8: True freedom

Tradition attributes to the dying Marinus the words: "I leave you free." Christian freedom is not doing whatever we like; it is being free to love and to do good, without fear. The people of San Marino have kept this word for centuries as a treasure.

Prayer: Lord, set me free from sin and fear, so that I may love as you love.

Today: Go to confession, or examine your conscience tonight.

Day 9: For the common good

From the small community of Mount Titano a whole people was born, still proud of its saint after many centuries. Faith lived together can shape a society. Let us pray for those who govern and for the common good, so that public life may serve every person, especially the weakest.

Prayer: Lord, give wisdom and integrity to those who hold public office, and peace to our communities.

Today: Pray for your local leaders by name.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Marinus, stonemason, hermit and deacon, you joined work and prayer, service and freedom. Watch over workers and migrants, over families and communities, and over those who serve the common good. Obtain for me the grace I ask in this novena (name it in silence), if it is God's will. Help me to build my life on Christ, the cornerstone, and to remain free to love. Amen.*

At the end of the novena, if you can, take part in Mass on September 3 and give thanks for the grace of work, for the freedom you enjoy and for all who, like Marinus, quietly build up the Church and society by their daily labor.

You can also pray the prayer to Saint Marinus or read the life of Saint Marinus.

PILGRIMAGE

Basilica of San Marino on Mount Titano

The Basilica of San Marino, called in Italian the *Basilica del Santo* or *Basilica di San Marino*, stands in the heart of the old town of San Marino, on Mount Titano. It keeps the relics of the holy deacon whom the republic venerates as its founder. It is the main place of pilgrimage to Saint Marinus, especially around September 3.

A very ancient place of worship

The Christians of Mount Titano have honored their saint for centuries at this spot, where an older church, called a *pieve*, once stood and already held his tomb. When it became too dilapidated, it was replaced in the 19th century by the present Neoclassical building, with its columned facade overlooking the square. The relics of Saint Marinus are kept and venerated here, and a large statue of the saint stands in the chancel.



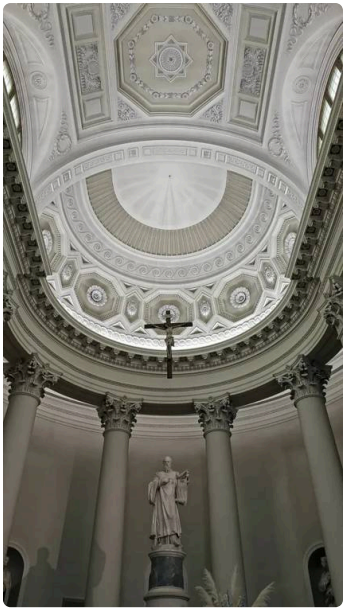
The Basilica of San Marino, exterior view.

Visiting the basilica

The basilica is located in the historic center, a World Heritage Site along with Mount Titano. It is reached on foot through the lanes of the old town. Right next door is the small Church of Saint Peter, where tradition shows two niches carved into the rock, presented as the "beds" of Saint Marinus and his companion Saint Leo. The visit can continue to the three towers that crown the mountain.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Marinus. Before his relics, entrust your work, your family, and those who carry public responsibilities, then recite the prayer to Saint Marinus. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.



The interior of the Basilica of San Marino.

Other places of Saint Marinus

- **Church of Saint Peter in San Marino**: next to the basilica, with the niches of tradition.
- **Rab** (Croatia): the Dalmatian island from which he is said to have come.
- **Rimini**: the city where he worked as a stonecutter and proclaimed the Gospel.
- **San Leo**: the town that grew, according to tradition, from the hermitage of his companion Leo.

Practical information

The old town of San Marino is on a height and is visited mostly on foot: bring good shoes. On September 3, the feast of the saint and of the republic, celebrations take place and crowds are large. Opening hours and Mass times

may vary: check with the parish or the San Marino tourist office before your visit.

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