BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Menoux (Menulphus)

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: July 12

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IN BRIEF

Saint Menoux (Menulphus)

6th-century hermit from Ireland according to tradition, venerated at Saint-Menoux in the Allier.

Feast day	July 12
Born	6th century, British Isles, probably Ireland
Died	6th or 7th century, Mailly-sur-Rose, now Saint-Menoux (Allier, France)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century
Patron saint of	people suffering from troubles of the mind (popular tradition)

In this booklet

Life

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Novena to Saint Menoux

Church of Saint-Menoux

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Menoux (Menulphus)

Saint Menoux, also called Menulphus or Menou, was a 6th-century hermit who came from the British Isles, probably from Ireland. According to tradition, after a stay in Brittany with Saint Corentin and a pilgrimage to Rome, he stopped in the Bourbonnais, on the banks of the river Ours, where he lived and died. His tomb is venerated in the church of the village that bears his name, Saint-Menoux, in the Allier department of France. His feast day is July 12.

Who was Saint Menoux?

Saint Menoux belongs to the great family of Celtic monks and hermits who traveled across Europe in the first centuries of the Middle Ages. His life is known only from late accounts, in which the memory of a real man is mixed with legend. Neither the date of his birth nor that of his death is known, and even his origin remains uncertain: tradition makes him the son of an Irish king, while other authors have him come from England, Scotland or Britain. What is certain is the age of his cult around his tomb, in the diocese of Bourges and later of Moulins, and the popular devotion that still surrounds him today.

Key dates in the life of Menoux

- **6th century**: Born in the British Isles, probably in Ireland, into a noble family according to tradition.
- **Under the reign of Childebert I (511-558)**: He crosses to Armorica and settles in Quimper, with Saint Corentin.
- **Afterward**: According to tradition, he refuses the office of bishop, then goes on pilgrimage to Rome; some authors, without firm evidence, make him a bishop of Quimper.

- **On his way back from Rome**: He stops at Mailly-sur-Rose, on the river Ours, in the Bourbonnais, and lives there as a hermit.
- **6th or 7th century**: Dies there; he is buried in the village cemetery.
- **c. 1000**: The bishop of Bourges has his remains moved and a church built over them; the village takes the name Saint-Menoux.
- **12th century**: Construction of the Romanesque church that still houses his sarcophagus.
- **French Revolution**: The Benedictine abbey of Saint-Menoux is destroyed, but the church and the tomb remain.

A pilgrim from the islands

According to tradition, Menoux left his country to become a pilgrim, like many Irish monks who gave up their homeland for love of Christ. He crossed Britain and reached Armorica, where he settled in Quimper with Saint Corentin. The accounts say that Corentin wanted to entrust him with the office of bishop, and that he refused. Other authors claim instead that he succeeded Corentin in the see of Quimper, but the oldest records of the region do not mention him: it is wiser to remain cautious. Menoux then left for Rome, to the tomb of the apostles, and tradition credits him with many miracles along the way.

The hermit of the Ours

On his way home, Menoux stopped to rest on the banks of the Ours, a small river in the Bourbonnais, at a place then called Mailly-sur-Rose. He decided to stay. He lived there in prayer and meditation, serving the poor and the sick. The local people saw him as a man of God; they came to him for advice and healing.

A beautiful tradition tells that he took under his protection a simple-minded man of the village, named Blaise, whom everyone mocked. Unable to pronounce the name Menulphus properly, Blaise called him "Menoux," and the name stuck. When the saint died, Blaise would not leave his friend: he spent his days and nights on his grave, and had even made an opening in the coffin to stay close to him. The parish priest finally had a sarcophagus made with an opening. Popular tradition also credits him with the legend of the grass snake, which is said to explain the name of the nearby village of Couleuvre.

The tomb and the "débredinoire"

The miracles attributed to the saint drew crowds to his grave. Around the year 1000, the bishop of Bourges had his remains moved and a church built over them: the village then took the name Saint-Menoux. A Benedictine abbey grew up there, which was destroyed during the Revolution. The present Romanesque church keeps, in the apse of the choir, the saint's Merovingian sarcophagus, which still contains his relics.

This sarcophagus has an opening called the "débredinoire": according to a custom that is still alive, people put their head into it to be "débrediné," that is, cured of "bredinerie," a Bourbonnais word for foolishness or troubles of the mind. Such openings, called fenestellae, once allowed pilgrims to come close to the relics. Even today, families bring children or relatives suffering from mental illness, and visitors come to ask for peace of mind.

Devotion and memory in Brittany

The cult of Saint Menoux spread through the old diocese of Bourges. In Brittany, he is celebrated on July 12 in the calendar of Breton saints, but he is little honored there, probably because he died far from the peninsula. A few place names seem to keep his memory, such as Pont-Menou in Plestin-les-

Grèves, Le Vau-Meno in Saint-Brieuc or Kermeno in Bignan; other connections remain uncertain. In the church of Saint-Menoux, statues and stained-glass windows show him as a bishop or a pilgrim.

What can we learn from Saint Menoux?

Saint Menoux is the friend of the little ones. Tradition remembers above all his tenderness for a man everyone mocked, and the faithfulness of this simple friend who would not leave him. You can pray to him for people with mental illness or intellectual disabilities, for their families, for those who are rejected or ridiculed, and for all pilgrims. His life reminds us that holiness can take root in a quiet village by a river, in prayer and kindness.

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

Where to pray to Saint Menoux

- **Saint-Menoux** (Allier, France): the Romanesque church that houses his sarcophagus and the débredinoire.
- **Quimper** (Finistère): the town where, according to tradition, he lived with Saint Corentin.
- **At home**: praying for someone who suffers in mind.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Menoux for Peace of Mind

Saint Menoux (Menulphus), a 6th-century hermit who came from Ireland according to tradition, settled in the Bourbonnais on his way back from a pilgrimage to Rome. He is remembered above all for his kindness to a simple-minded man whom everyone mocked. His tomb, at Saint-Menoux in the Allier, is still visited by those who ask for peace of mind. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him vulnerable people, those who suffer in mind and their families.

Prayer to Saint Menoux

Saint Menoux,
pilgrim from distant islands,
you left your homeland for love of Christ
and found your home beside a quiet river.
Teach me to seek God in simplicity
and to make my life a pilgrimage toward him.

You protected a man whom everyone mocked,
and he loved you beyond death.
Give me your kind gaze
on those whom the world rejects.

I entrust to you those who suffer in mind,
people living with disabilities,
those with mental illness and those who care for them.
Obtain for them peace and comfort,
and keep us all in the love of the Lord.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Menoux

- On his feast day, July 12, or during a pilgrimage to Saint-Menoux.
- For someone suffering from mental illness or an intellectual disability.
- For the families and caregivers who accompany them.
- For those who are mocked, isolated or rejected.
- Before a pilgrimage or a long journey.

A prayer for peace of mind

> *Lord, calm troubled minds*
> *and comfort anxious hearts.*
> *Saint Menoux, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Menoux from July 4 to 12, and read the life of Saint Menoux.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Menoux

This novena is an original composition inspired by the life of Saint Menoux (Menulphus), a 6th-century hermit venerated at Saint-Menoux, in the Allier. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, July 12, begin on July 4. 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 Menoux, pray for us." The small act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely. The episodes recalled come from tradition, which mixes history and legend.

Day 1: Leaving his homeland

According to tradition, Menoux left Ireland and his family to become a pilgrim, like so many Celtic monks who wanted to leave everything for Christ.

Prayer: Lord, give me a free heart, ready to follow you wherever you call me.

Act of the day: Give up something unnecessary to which you are too attached.

Day 2: With Saint Corentin

In Armorica, Menoux lived in Quimper with Saint Corentin. From a bishop he learned the life of prayer and the service of the Church.

Prayer: Lord, bless our bishops and priests, and give me good guides on your path.

Act of the day: Pray for the bishop of your diocese.

Day 3: Refusing honors

Tradition says that Menoux refused the office of bishop. He preferred the humility of a hidden life.

Prayer: Lord, keep me from seeking the first place. Teach me to serve without expecting recognition.

Act of the day: Do a discreet service without letting anyone know.

Day 4: On the road to Rome

Menoux went on pilgrimage to the tomb of the apostles Peter and Paul. The pilgrim moves forward step by step, with trust.

Prayer: Lord, make my life a pilgrimage toward you, in communion with the whole Church.

Act of the day: Pray for the pope and for the unity of the Church.

Day 5: Stopping by the Ours

On his way back, Menoux stopped to rest by a river in the Bourbonnais. He understood that God was waiting for him there, and he stayed.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to recognize your will in the unexpected stages of my life.

Act of the day: Take some quiet time, outdoors if possible, to listen to God.

Day 6: Praying in solitude

As a hermit, Menoux lived a life of prayer and meditation. His solitude was not a closing in: it became a welcome for all who came to him.

Prayer: Lord, may my prayer open me to others instead of shutting me in on myself.

Act of the day: Spend fifteen minutes in silent prayer.

Day 7: The friend of Blaise

Menoux protected Blaise, a simple-minded man whom everyone mocked. Blaise called him "Menoux," unable to say his name. Their friendship has come down through the centuries.

Prayer: Lord, help me to see your presence in the most vulnerable and to defend them.

Act of the day: Spend time with someone who is isolated or living with a disability.

Day 8: A faithfulness stronger than death

When the saint died, Blaise stayed day and night by his grave. The priest had a sarcophagus made with an opening so that he could stay close to his friend.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for faithful friendships. Keep in your peace those I have loved who have gone before me.

Act of the day: Pray for a friend who has died, or visit their grave.

Day 9: Peace of mind

For centuries, people have come to the tomb of Saint Menoux to ask for healing of troubles of the mind. Christ, physician of souls and bodies, still brings comfort.

Prayer: Lord, calm troubled minds. Through the intercession of Saint Menoux, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Pray for someone who suffers mentally and, if possible, attend Mass.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Menoux,*
> *pilgrim of Christ and friend of the little ones,*
> *you made a village of the Bourbonnais a place of peace.*
> *Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *Watch over those who suffer in mind*
> *and teach us to love as you loved.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

PILGRIMAGE

Church of Saint-Menoux

The church of Saint-Menoux stands in the center of the village of the same name, in the Allier, in the heart of the Bourbonnais region of France. It houses the tomb of Saint Menoux (Menulphus), a 6th-century hermit who came from the British Isles according to tradition. A former abbey church, it is one of the fine Romanesque buildings of the region, and a place of pilgrimage still visited thanks to the famous "débredinoire."

From hermitage to abbey

According to tradition, Menoux stopped on the banks of the Ours, at a place called Mailly-sur-Rose, and lived there as a hermit until his death. He was first buried in the village cemetery. The miracles attributed to his intercession drew the faithful, so that around the year 1000 the bishop of Bourges had his remains moved and a church built over them. The village then took the saint's name. A Benedictine abbey grew up around his tomb; it was destroyed during the Revolution, but the church was preserved and now serves as the parish church.

What you can see

The church is striking for the harmony of its Romanesque architecture, especially its choir. In the apse lies the Merovingian sandstone sarcophagus that still contains the saint's relics, altered several times over the centuries. It has an opening, the "débredinoire": according to an old custom, people put their head into it to be "débrediné," that is, cured of troubles of the mind. Statues and stained-glass windows recall the saint's life. In the village, the Saint-Martin fountain is also linked to popular traditions about Saint Menoux.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Menoux. Near the sarcophagus, entrust to him people who suffer in mind, those living with a disability and their families, then say the prayer to Saint Menoux. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Practical information

Saint-Menoux is in the Allier, not far from Moulins and Souvigny, and is easy to reach by car. The church is a place of worship: silence and modest dress are requested, especially during services. Opening hours and Mass times may vary: check with the parish or the tourist office before you come.

Credits and sources

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