

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Monegundis

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: July 2

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IN BRIEF

Saint Monegundis

Mother from chartres who became a recluse at tours in the 6th century, serving the sick near the tomb of saint martin.

Feast day	July 2
Born	6th century, Chartres
Died	c. 570, Tours
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Monegundis for Grieving Parents and the Sick

Novena to Saint Monegundis

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Monegundis

Saint Monegundis was a woman of Chartres in the sixth century. Married and the mother of two daughters, she lost them both. After this bereavement, she withdrew to a cell to pray, then went to Tours, near the tomb of Saint Martin, where she gathered a small community of women to serve the sick. She died there around 570. Saint Gregory of Tours told her story. Her feast day is July 2. This page is an original composition inspired by her life.

Who was Saint Monegundis?

Monegundis is known only through Gregory of Tours, who gives her a chapter in his *Life of the Fathers* and a passage in his *Glory of the Confessors*. His account is that of a hagiographer: it stresses miracles and aims to edify its readers. But he speaks of a woman he probably knew only indirectly, who died shortly before he became bishop of Tours in 573. Historians, such as Luce Pietri, see in her the founder of one of those monastery-hospitals that welcomed the sick who came on pilgrimage to the tomb of Saint Martin. Unusually for a woman, the Roman Martyrology gives her the title "confessor."

Key dates

- **6th century**: Born at Chartres into a well-off family; she marries and has two daughters.
- **Adulthood**: Her two daughters die young; after a long mourning, she withdraws to a cell of prayer at Chartres.
- **After 561**: She leaves Chartres for Tours, to live near the tomb of Saint Martin.

- **Soon after**: Her husband brings her back to Chartres by force; she then returns to Tours, where she settles for good.
- **560s**: She gathers around her a small community of women who pray and care for the sick.
- **c. 570**: Dies at Tours; she is buried in her cell, and her tomb becomes a place of prayer.
- **1562**: Her relics, moved in the meantime to Saint-Pierre-le-Puellier in Orléans, are desecrated there during the Wars of Religion.

A grieving mother

Monegundis lived at Chartres. She was married and had two daughters, whom she loved tenderly. Both children died prematurely. The mother's grief was immense. Gregory tells that after a long time of tears, she feared that her endless sadness was becoming an offense to God. She then laid aside her mourning clothes and decided to turn entirely to the Lord.

She had a small cell prepared, where she lived in prayer and fasting. She ate only a barley loaf that she kneaded and baked herself. Gregory reports that when her maidservant abandoned her and water ran short, she prayed, and snow fell on her window ledge.

The healer who fled glory

Soon people spoke of healings. A curious neighbor went blind while spying on her; Monegundis, distressed to be the cause, prayed for her and restored her sight. A deaf man was then brought to her and was healed. Her family boasted of these wonders. Fearing vanity, Monegundis decided to leave.

She took the road to Tours, the greatest pilgrimage of Gaul, to live near the tomb of Saint Martin. On the way, she stopped in a town of Touraine where the feast of Saint Medard was being kept, whose church held relics. After a

night of prayer, a young girl with a tumor threw herself at her feet; Monegundis prayed, made the Sign of the Cross, and the girl was healed.

A community serving the sick

At Tours, Monegundis settled in a small cell near the basilica of Saint Martin. Her husband, having heard of her reputation, came with friends to bring her back to Chartres by force. She resumed her life of prayer in her first cell, then, trusting in Saint Martin, set out again for Tours. This time her husband did not pursue her.

A small group of women formed around her. They lived poorly: barley bread, wine mixed with water on feast days, rush mats to sleep on. They prayed and welcomed the sick who came seeking healing at Saint Martin's tomb. Gregory describes Monegundis feeling, massaging, applying compresses, then praying and blessing. She cared for people as much as she interceded for them. As her death approached, her companions asked her to bless oil and salt for the sick who would come after.

Devotion and iconography

Monegundis was buried in her cell, which became a place of pilgrimage. Gregory tells of many healings at her tomb. Her name entered the martyrologies very early, on July 2. Her foundation at Tours survived for a long time; it is last mentioned in 1031. Her body was later moved to Orléans, to the monastery of Saint-Pierre-le-Puellier, where it was desecrated by Protestants in 1562. Some relics had earlier been taken to Chimay, in present-day Belgium, where a collegiate church received them. The parish church of Orphin, in the Yvelines, is dedicated to her. She is honored as a saint by the Catholic Church, which remembers her on July 2.

What can we learn from Saint Monegundis?

Monegundis went through the worst trial for a mother: the death of her children. She did not deny her pain, but she refused to be shut up in it. She turned her grief into prayer, then into service of the sick. She is an intercessor for grieving parents, for caregivers, and for those who are searching for a way to live after a loss.

Where to pray to Saint Monegundis

- **Tours** (Indre-et-Loire): the Basilica of Saint-Martin, near which she lived and died.
- **Chartres** (Eure-et-Loir): the Cathedral of Notre-Dame, in the city where she lived her mourning.
- **Orphin** (Yvelines): the church of Sainte-Monégonde.
- **Chimay** (Hainaut, Belgium): the collegiate church of Saints Peter and Paul, the former collegiate church that received some of her relics.

To pray with her at home, you can use the prayer to Saint Monegundis or the novena to Saint Monegundis.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Monegundis for Grieving Parents and the Sick

Saint Monegundis, a woman of Chartres in the sixth century, lost her two daughters. After a long mourning, she gave herself to God in prayer, then went to Tours, near the tomb of Saint Martin, where with a few companions she welcomed and cared for the sick. This prayer is an original composition inspired by her life, and not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to her intercession grieving parents, the sick and those who care for them.

Prayer to Saint Monegundis

Saint Monegundis,
you knew the pain of losing your children,
and your tears flowed for a long time.
You did not let grief close you to God:
you laid your sorrow in prayer.

You fled praise
and went to live humbly near Saint Martin.
There, with your sisters,
you welcomed the sick,
you cared for them with your own hands
and you prayed for their healing.

Look on parents who mourn a child,
on the sick who wait for relief,
on caregivers who give themselves without counting.
Obtain for them consolation and strength,
and teach us to turn our wounds
into a path of charity.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Monegundis

- On her feast day, July 2.
- After the loss of a child, at any age.
- For a person who is ill, especially in a hospital.
- For nurses, aides and all caregivers.
- When a bereavement seems never to end and you need to find the strength to live again.

A prayer for grieving mothers

You can say simply:

> *Lord, I entrust to you my children, those who are near me and those who are with you.*
> *Keep them in your peace, and console my heart.*
> *Saint Monegundis, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for her feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Monegundis from June 24 to July 2, and learn about the life of Saint Monegundis.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Monegundis

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Monegundis, a mother of Chartres who, after the death of her two daughters, gave herself to God and to the care of the sick at Tours in the sixth century. It is not an official liturgical text. To end it on her feast day, July 2, begin on June 24. It is especially suited to times of bereavement and illness, and you can pray it at any time of year.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the Sign of the Cross and present 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 Monegundis, pray for us." The small act proposed each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A mother

Monegundis was a wife and mother at Chartres. She loved her two daughters with all her heart. Her holiness begins there, in the ordinary love of a family.

Prayer: Lord, bless mothers and fathers. Keep our children under your protection.

Today: Pray for each of your children, godchildren or young relatives, naming them.

Day 2: Mourning

Monegundis's two daughters died young. Her pain was immense. God does not reproach tears: Jesus himself wept at the tomb of his friend.

Prayer: Lord, console parents who have lost a child. Stay beside them in the night.

Today: Pray for a grieving family, or send them a message of support.

Day 3: Rising again

After a long time of tears, Monegundis laid aside her mourning clothes. She did not stop loving her daughters, but she refused to let sorrow shut her off from God.

Prayer: Lord, help me to rise again after the trial, without forgetting those I have loved.

Today: Do one small act of life: go out, call someone, take up an activity you set aside.

Day 4: The cell of prayer

Monegundis withdrew to a cell, with a barley loaf for food. In prayer she discovered that God can fill the emptiness left by loss.

Prayer: Lord, be my strength and my food. Teach me to remain with you.

Today: Take a time of silent prayer, alone, in a quiet place.

Day 5: Trust

Abandoned by her maidservant and without water, Monegundis prayed, and snow fell at her window. God provides for those who trust in him.

Prayer: Lord, I place in your hands what I lack. Give me what I need.

Today: Entrust to God, in writing, a material worry.

Day 6: Fleeing glory

When she was praised for her healings, Monegundis feared pride and left. She knew that every good comes from God.

Prayer: Lord, keep me from seeking compliments. May everything I do give you glory.

Today: Do a service without letting anyone know.

Day 7: The pilgrimage to Saint Martin

Monegundis set out for Tours, to the tomb of Saint Martin. Even when she was brought back by force, she took the road again. The path to God calls for perseverance.

Prayer: Lord, give me perseverance when the road is hard and I am tempted to give up.

Today: Take up again a good resolution you had abandoned.

Day 8: Caring for the sick

At Tours, Monegundis and her companions welcomed and cared for the sick. She felt, massaged, applied compresses, and prayed. Caring for the body is also a work of charity.

Prayer: Lord, bless the sick and those who care for them. Give them patience, skill and gentleness.

Today: Visit someone who is ill, or thank a caregiver.

Day 9: The blessed oil and salt

Before dying, Monegundis blessed oil and salt for the sick who would come after her. She kept serving to the end. Her tomb became a place of prayer and healing.

Prayer: Lord, make my life a service to the very end. Through the intercession of Saint Monegundis, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Today: Pray for the dying and for those who accompany them.

Living the novena with Saint Monegundis

Saint Monegundis does not promise to erase pain. She shows a path: to welcome tears, entrust them to God, and then, little by little, let wounded love turn toward others. If you pray this novena in bereavement, go at your own pace. Do not hesitate to ask for help from loved ones, a priest, or an organization that supports grieving families.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Monegundis,*
> *tried mother and servant of the sick,*
> *you changed your tears into prayer*
> *and your sorrow into charity.*
> *Present to the Lord the intention I have carried during these nine days.*
> *Console grieving parents,*
> *relieve the sick and strengthen those who care for them.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

You can also pray the prayer to Saint Monegundis at any time, and learn about the life of Saint Monegundis.

CREDITS

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