BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Monulph

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: July 16

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IN BRIEF

Saint Monulph

Bishop of Tongeren-Maastricht in the 6th century, builder of the church of Saint Servatius.

Feast day	July 16
Born	early 6th century
Died	c. 599 (609 according to other authors)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Monulph, Bishop and Builder

Novena to Saint Monulph

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Monulph

Saint Monulph (Monulphe in French, Monulfus in Latin) was a bishop of Tongeren-Maastricht in the 6th century, successor of Saint Domitian. According to Gregory of Tours, he built at Maastricht a great church over the tomb of Saint Servatius, the ancestor of the present basilica. Liège tradition also credits him with founding a small oratory in the valley of the Légia, from which the city of Liège is said to have grown. He died around 599 and is celebrated on July 16, together with his successor Saint Gondulph.

Who was Saint Monulph?

Monulph belongs to the line of bishops who governed, in the Merovingian period, the diocese of Tongeren, whose see had settled at Maastricht, near the tomb of Saint Servatius. He succeeded Saint Domitian, who died around 560, and preceded Saint Gondulph. Older historians do not agree on the length of his episcopate: he is often credited with thirty-nine years of ministry, with his death placed in 599 or 609 depending on the author. We know little of his personal life. Two memories nevertheless make him important for the religious history of the Meuse region: the great church he raised over the tomb of Saint Servatius, and the tradition that makes him the first Christian builder on the site of Liège.

Key dates in the life of Monulph

- **Early 6th century**: Born, at an unknown date and place.
- **c. 560**: After the death of Saint Domitian, he becomes bishop of Tongeren-Maastricht.
- **During his episcopate**: He builds at Maastricht a great church over the tomb of Saint Servatius, according to Gregory of Tours.

- **During his episcopate**: According to Liège tradition, he stops in the valley of the Légia and has an oratory built there, dedicated to Saints Cosmas and Damian.
- **c. 599**: Dies, after about thirty-nine years as bishop according to older authors; others place his death in 609.
- **c. 600**: Saint Gondulph succeeds him in the see of Tongeren-Maastricht.
- **Early 8th century**: Saint Lambert is murdered at Liège; Saint Hubert settles there, and the village becomes a town.

The builder over the tomb of Saint Servatius

In the 6th century, the tomb of Saint Servatius at Maastricht already drew many faithful. Gregory of Tours, the historian of the Franks, records that a bishop named Monulf built a great church over this tomb, to welcome pilgrims and honor the saint. It is one of the few facts of his life attested by an almost contemporary witness. This church is the ancestor of the present basilica of Saint Servatius, one of the great shrines of the Netherlands. Monulph thus helped make Maastricht a center of pilgrimage for the whole Meuse region.

The prophecy of Liège

Liège tradition tells that one day Monulph was traveling from Dinant to Maastricht. He stopped in a small valley where a few huts stood on the bank of a stream, the Légia. Struck by the beauty of the place, he is said to have declared that God had chosen this spot for the salvation of many, and that a powerful city would one day rise there. He had a small oratory built there in honor of Saints Cosmas and Damian, the physician martyrs.

Little by little, the faithful came to settle around the chapel. Later, Saint Lambert, bishop of Maastricht, liked to withdraw to this place to pray; it was there that he was murdered, at the beginning of the 8th century. His successor,

Saint Hubert, settled there and had a church built in honor of the martyr. The village became a town, surrounded by walls. This story is partly legendary, but it expresses Liège's gratitude to the bishop who is said to have first consecrated this place to God. A street in Liège bears his name, the rue Monulphe.

Devotion and memory

Saint Monulph is celebrated on July 16, together with Saint Gondulph, his successor. The two bishops are often linked in the memory of the diocese and in older works, such as Alban Butler's Lives of the Saints. His memory is tied to two cities: Maastricht, where he raised the church of Saint Servatius, and Liège, which sees him as the herald of its birth. He is shown as a bishop, with mitre and crozier.

What can we learn from Saint Monulph?

Saint Monulph was a builder. He honored the memory of those who had gone before him in the faith, by raising a church over the tomb of Saint Servatius, and he was able to see the future in a place that was still modest. His example invites us to hand on the heritage we have received and to prepare what others will complete. You can pray to him for bishops and church builders, for the cities of Maastricht and Liège, and for all who begin a work they will not see completed.

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

Where to pray to Saint Monulph

- **Maastricht** (Netherlands): the basilica of Saint Servatius, heir to the great church he built over the saint's tomb.
- **Liège** (Belgium): the city that, according to tradition, grew up around the oratory he built in the valley of the Légia.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Monulph, Bishop and Builder

Saint Monulph, bishop of Tongeren-Maastricht in the 6th century, built a great church over the tomb of Saint Servatius; Liège tradition sees in him the first Christian builder on the site of Liège. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him pastors, builders and those who begin a work.

Prayer to Saint Monulph

Saint Monulph,
pastor of Tongeren and Maastricht,
you honored the tomb of Saint Servatius
and built for God a house of prayer.
Teach me to keep alive the heritage
of those who went before me in the faith.

You who, according to tradition,
saw in a humble valley
the promise of a great city,
give me eyes of hope
for modest beginnings.

Bless the cities of Maastricht and Liège,
bless bishops and those who build up the Church,
and make us living stones.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Monulph

- On July 16, his feast day, with Saint Gondulph.
- For the bishop of your diocese and those who work with him.
- At the start of a project, a building or a new work.
- For the cities of Liège and Maastricht.
- When you need hope in the face of a fragile beginning.

A short invocation

> *Saint Monulph, builder of God's house,*
> *pray for us and for our Churches. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Monulph from July 8 to 16, and read the life of Saint Monulph.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Monulph

This novena is inspired by the life of Saint Monulph, bishop of Tongeren-Maastricht in the 6th century, builder of the church of Saint Servatius and, according to tradition, of the first oratory of Liège. 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 16, begin on July 8. 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 Monulph, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: Called to serve

Around 560, Monulph succeeded Saint Domitian as bishop of Tongeren-Maastricht. He received the care of a still young Church.

Prayer: Lord, help me to accept the responsibilities you entrust to me with humility and trust.

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

Day 2: Heir of Saint Servatius

Monulph governed the diocese where Saint Servatius rests. He knew he was walking in the footsteps of a saint.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the saints who founded our Churches. Make us worthy of their heritage.

Act of the day: Read the life of a saint from your region.

Day 3: Building over a saint's tomb

According to Gregory of Tours, Monulph built a great church over the tomb of Saint Servatius. He honored the memory of the one who had gone before him.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to honor those who handed on the faith to me.

Act of the day: Pray at the grave of a loved one, or for them, giving thanks.

Day 4: Welcoming pilgrims

The church of Maastricht welcomed those who came to pray to Saint Servatius. Monulph opened a house for all.

Prayer: Lord, make our churches open and welcoming places for those who seek you.

Act of the day: Warmly welcome a newcomer in your parish or neighborhood.

Day 5: On the road

Tradition shows Monulph traveling from Dinant to Maastricht. The pastor visits his people and travels through his diocese.

Prayer: Lord, accompany those who are on the road, and keep them from all danger.

Act of the day: Pray for travelers, drivers and those who work on the roads.

Day 6: Seeing further

In the small valley of the Légia, Monulph is said to have announced that a great city would be born. He saw the future in what was still poor and small.

Prayer: Lord, give me eyes of hope for fragile beginnings.

Act of the day: Encourage someone who is starting a project.

Day 7: An oratory for the holy physicians

Monulph dedicated his oratory to Saints Cosmas and Damian, physician martyrs. He entrusted the place to those who cared for the sick without payment.

Prayer: Lord, bless doctors, caregivers and the sick.

Act of the day: Pray for a sick person and for those who care for them.

Day 8: Sowing for others

After Monulph, Saint Lambert and Saint Hubert made Liège a town and an episcopal see. Monulph sowed what others reaped.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to work for your Kingdom without needing to see all the fruits myself.

Act of the day: Do a good deed whose result you will not see.

Day 9: Faithful to the end

Monulph died around 599, after a long episcopate. The Church celebrates him on July 16 with Saint Gondulph, his successor.

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

Act of the day: Attend Mass and pray for the deceased bishops of your diocese.

Living the novena with Saint Monulph

Saint Monulph teaches us to honor the heritage we have received and to prepare the future with hope. During these nine days, you can carry your bishop, your parish, the cities of Maastricht and Liège, and all who are beginning a work.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Monulph,*
> *bishop and builder,*
> *present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *Grant me to honor the heritage I have received*
> *and to sow with hope.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

Credits and sources

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