BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Pantaleon of Nicomedia

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: July 27

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IN BRIEF

Saint Pantaleon of Nicomedia

Christian physician of Nicomedia, martyr under Diocletian, unmercenary saint and patron of physicians.

Feast day	July 27
Born	late 3rd century, Nicomedia (today Izmit, Turkey), according to tradition
Died	c. 305, Nicomedia
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	4th century
Patron saint of	physicians, wet nurses, childminders

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Pantaleon for the Sick and Caregivers

Novena to Saint Pantaleon of Nicomedia

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LIFE

Saint Pantaleon of Nicomedia

Saint Pantaleon, called Panteleimon in the Eastern Churches, was a Christian physician of Nicomedia, in Asia Minor, today's Izmit in Turkey, who died a martyr early in the 4th century, during the persecution of Diocletian. His life has come down to us in legendary form, but his cult is very ancient and widespread throughout the Church. Counted among the holy unmercenaries, the physicians who treated the sick for free, and among the Fourteen Holy Helpers, he is the patron of physicians. His feast day is July 27.

Who was Saint Pantaleon?

The name Pantaleon comes from Greek and means roughly "lion in all things". According to tradition, he received at baptism the name Panteleimon, "the all-merciful", under which the Orthodox Churches honor him. He is one of the many martyrs of Nicomedia, then an imperial residence, during the great persecution of the early 4th century. The accounts of his passion, written later, are full of marvels, and no reliable biography can be drawn from them. But the synaxaria of the Eastern Churches show that he was venerated very early, and his cult later spread to the West.

Key dates in the life of Pantaleon

- **Late 3rd century**: Born at Nicomedia, in Bithynia, to a pagan father and a Christian mother, Eubula, according to tradition.
- **Youth**: He studies medicine with a renowned physician, Euphrosinus, and becomes a physician at the imperial court.
- **Shortly after**: Instructed by a Christian priest, he converts and receives baptism.

- **Afterward**: He gives his goods to the poor and treats the sick for free in the name of Christ.
- **c. 305**: Denounced by jealous colleagues, he refuses to deny his faith and, after various tortures, is beheaded at Nicomedia.
- **Following centuries**: His cult spreads in the East, then in the West, especially in Venice and France.

The emperor's physician

According to tradition, Pantaleon was brought up as a Christian by his mother, but was not baptized. His father, who remained pagan, entrusted him to a great physician of Nicomedia to learn his art. The young man was brilliant and became a physician at the court of Emperor Maximian, where he was highly regarded. A Christian priest then instructed him in the faith. The account says that after obtaining two miraculous healings by calling on Christ, he converted and asked for baptism.

Healing for free in the name of Christ

Once a Christian, Pantaleon changed his life. He sold his goods, gave them to the poor and treated the sick without asking anything of them, attributing the healings to Christ. That is why the East counts him among the "unmercenaries", the saints who practiced medicine "without money", like Saints Cosmas and Damian or Saint Cyrus of Alexandria. His reputation grew among the people, and with it the jealousy of other physicians.

The martyrdom

According to the account, it was these colleagues who denounced him as a Christian. Arrested, he was ordered to sacrifice to the gods and refused. Condemned to be thrown to the beasts, he underwent various tortures which he miraculously survived, before being beheaded at Nicomedia. These episodes

bear the mark of the epic passions composed after the persecutions, and historians read them as accounts meant to exalt the martyr's constancy rather than as an exact record.

A very popular cult

In the Orthodox Churches, Panteleimon is honored as a "great martyr". In the West, he is one of the Fourteen Holy Helpers, invoked together in the Middle Ages for help in sickness and danger. The Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches both keep his memorial on July 27. He is the patron of physicians, and also of wet nurses and childminders; he is traditionally invoked against headaches, tuberculosis and squinting.

He was especially loved in Venice, where a church is dedicated to him, San Pantalon. The Venetians' neighbors even nicknamed them "Pantalone", and the name passed to a character of the commedia dell'arte, a talkative old man in long breeches, who gave French the word "pantalon" for trousers, and English "pantaloons". In France, a dozen towns and many churches bear his name, in the forms Saint-Pantaléon, Saint-Pandelon or Saint-Pantaly. In Latin America, especially in Buenos Aires, many faithful pray to him on the 27th of each month. He is shown as a young physician, with a medicine box or instruments, or holding the palm of martyrdom.

What can we learn from Saint Pantaleon?

Beyond the legends, Saint Pantaleon offers a fine model to those who care for the sick. He put his knowledge at the service of all, without seeking money or glory, and saw in each patient someone to care for in the name of Christ. He preferred death to denial. We can pray to him for doctors, nurses and care assistants, for the sick, and for all who work in caring professions with selflessness.

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

Where to pray to Saint Pantaleon

- **Venice** (Italy): the church of San Pantalon, which keeps works devoted to his life.
- **Ravello** (Italy), on the Amalfi Coast: the cathedral, where a relic of his blood is venerated and where he is the patron saint of the town.
- **Cologne** (Germany): the church of St. Pantaleon, a former Romanesque abbey that bears his name.
- **Commercy** (Meuse, France) and the many churches of Saint-Pantaléon in France.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Pantaleon for the Sick and Caregivers

Saint Pantaleon, a physician of Nicomedia, treated the sick for free in the name of Christ before dying a martyr early in the 4th century. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him the sick, physicians and all caregivers, and those awaiting healing.

Prayer to Saint Pantaleon

Saint Pantaleon,
physician of bodies and witness of Christ,
you put your knowledge at the service of the poor
without asking anything in return.
Look kindly on the sick I entrust to you,
and obtain for them, if God wills, health of body
and always peace of heart.

Bless physicians, nurses and all caregivers.
Give them skill, patience and gentleness,
and may they see in each patient
a brother or sister to serve.

You did not deny your faith in the face of death:
strengthen me in trial and illness.
Teach me to place my life in the hands of the Lord,
the true physician of our souls and bodies.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Pantaleon

- On his feast day, July 27, or on the 27th of each month, as many faithful do in Latin America.
- For a sick person, before a medical test or an operation.
- For physicians, nurses, medical students and all caregivers.
- In case of headaches or a lasting illness.
- For wet nurses and childminders, whose patron he is.

An invocation for a sick person

> *Lord Jesus, you who healed all who came to you,*
> *lay your hand on the one I entrust to you.*
> *Saint Pantaleon, pray for them. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Pantaleon from July 19 to 27, and read the life of Saint Pantaleon.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Pantaleon of Nicomedia

Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It follows the life of Saint Pantaleon, physician and martyr of Nicomedia, as told by tradition, whose accounts are largely legendary. To finish it on his feast day, July 27, begin on July 19. It is especially suited to entrusting a sick person to God. You can pray it at any time of the year.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the Sign of the Cross and entrust your intention to God, naming the sick people you are carrying. Read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. End with: "Saint Pantaleon, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A mother's faith

According to tradition, Pantaleon received the faith from his Christian mother, while his father was pagan. She sowed in him what would sprout later.

Prayer: Lord, bless mothers who hand on the faith, and make what they have sown grow.

Act of the day: Pray for your mother, living or departed, and for mothers in difficulty.

Day 2: The gift of healing

Pantaleon studied medicine and became a renowned physician. The gift of healing is a grace to be placed at the service of others.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the talents you have given me. Teach me to put them at the service of my brothers and sisters.

Act of the day: Pray for medical and nursing students.

Day 3: Discovering Christ

A Christian priest instructed Pantaleon. The young physician discovered that Christ is the true physician, who heals the whole person.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, physician of our souls and bodies, heal what is wounded in me.

Act of the day: Read a healing story in the Gospel, for example Mark 1:29-34.

Day 4: Baptism

After seeing sick people healed through prayer, Pantaleon asked for baptism. His life took on a new meaning.

Prayer: Lord, renew in me the grace of my baptism, and make me live as a witness of your goodness.

Act of the day: Make the Sign of the Cross with holy water, giving thanks for your baptism.

Day 5: Healing without money

Pantaleon gave away his goods and treated the sick for free. He is one of the unmercenary saints, those who served "without money".

Prayer: Lord, free me from the love of money, and teach me free generosity.

Act of the day: Do a free service for someone who cannot repay you.

Day 6: Close to the sick

Pantaleon drew close to the sick and the poor. He cared for each one in the name of Christ.

Prayer: Lord, I entrust to you all the sick, especially those I carry in this novena. Give them courage and hope.

Act of the day: Visit, call or write to someone who is ill.

Day 7: For caregivers

Saint Pantaleon is the patron of physicians. He intercedes for all who devote their lives to caring for others.

Prayer: Lord, bless physicians, nurses, care assistants and all caregivers. Support them in their weariness.

Act of the day: Thank a caregiver you know.

Day 8: Facing jealousy

It was jealous colleagues who denounced Pantaleon. Other people's success can awaken envy in us.

Prayer: Lord, heal me of jealousy, and teach me to rejoice in the good that others do.

Act of the day: Sincerely congratulate someone on a success.

Day 9: Faithful unto death

Ordered to deny Christ, Pantaleon refused. After various tortures, he was beheaded at Nicomedia. His witness has crossed the centuries.

Prayer: Lord, keep me faithful in trial. Through the intercession of Saint Pantaleon, grant me the grace I ask of you in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass and pray for persecuted Christians.

Closing prayer

Saint Pantaleon,
physician of the poor and martyr of Christ,
you healed without asking anything
and gave your life for your faith.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Watch over the sick and those who care for them,
and keep us in hope.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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