BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Psote

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: December 21

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IN BRIEF

Saint Psote

Bishop of Psoi in Upper Egypt, martyr beheaded around 300.

Feast day	December 21
Born	3rd century (date unknown), Egypt
Died	c. 300, Ptolemais (Upper Egypt)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	3rd century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Psote for Persecuted Christians

Novena to Saint Psote

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Psote

Saint Psote (also called Pichoté, Abashadi or Amba Sada) was an Egyptian bishop, martyred at the beginning of the 4th century. Shepherd of Psoi, in Upper Egypt, he was beheaded around 300, at the time of the great persecutions of the Roman Empire, on the orders of the governor of Ptolemais. His feast day is December 21.

Who was Saint Psote?

Psote belongs to the multitude of martyrs of Egypt, the region of the Empire most harshly struck by the persecution of Diocletian and his successors. His memory has been kept above all by the Coptic tradition, which honors him under several names. The reliable information about him is very scanty: his title of bishop, his martyrdom by beheading and the place where it happened. The more detailed accounts of his passion, handed down in Coptic and Arabic, are late and of uncertain historical value. This page therefore keeps to the essentials.

Key dates in the life of Psote

- **Second half of the 3rd century**: Born in Egypt, on an unknown date.
- **Late 3rd century**: He becomes bishop of Psoi, in Upper Egypt.
- **Around 300**: According to tradition, he is arrested and brought before the governor of Ptolemais.
- **Around 300**: He is beheaded for refusing to deny Christ; the sources give the year 300, but if he was a victim of Diocletian's great persecution, which began in 303, his death would be a little later.
- **Following centuries**: The Church of Egypt keeps his memory; Latin calendars list him on December 21.

A bishop in a time of persecution

At the end of the 3rd century, Christianity was firmly rooted in the Nile valley. Christian communities were numerous as far as Upper Egypt, organized around their bishops, in communion with the see of Alexandria. Psote was one of these local pastors. The see of Psoi, a town close to ancient Ptolemais, lay in the region of present-day Sohag.

At the beginning of the 4th century, the Empire launched against Christians the most violent persecution in its history. The edicts ordered churches to be destroyed, the Scriptures burned, the clergy arrested and everyone forced to sacrifice to the gods. In Egypt, bishops were targeted first, for to strike the shepherd is to scatter the flock. Several of them gave their lives at that time, like Saint Phileas of Thmuis.

The martyrdom

According to tradition, Psote was arrested and brought before the governor of Ptolemais. Having refused to sacrifice and to deny Christ, he was condemned to death and beheaded. The date of his death remains approximate, around the year 300; the Coptic accounts of his passion add details, but these are too late to be accepted with certainty.

Devotion

Saint Psote is honored above all by the Christians of Egypt, who have kept the memory of their martyrs alive. In the Latin tradition, he is celebrated on December 21, the date given by the Nominis calendar of the Church in France; the Coptic Church commemorates him on another date in its own calendar. He is shown as a bishop, wearing liturgical vestments, sometimes with the palm of martyrdom.

What can we learn from Saint Psote?

We know little about Psote, but we know the essential: he was a shepherd who did not leave his flock and preferred to die rather than deny his faith. He recalls the faithfulness of the Churches of the East, and especially of Christian Egypt, which have come through so many persecutions. You can pray to him for Christians persecuted today, especially in Egypt, and for bishops called to stand firm.

Where to pray to Saint Psote

- **In your parish**: no known Catholic shrine is dedicated to him; you can pray to him anywhere, especially for the Christians of the East.
- **Sohag region** (Upper Egypt): the land where he was bishop and martyr.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Psote for Persecuted Christians

Saint Psote, bishop of Psoi in Upper Egypt, was beheaded around 300 for refusing to deny Christ. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him persecuted Christians, especially those of Egypt, and the pastors of the Church.

Prayer to Saint Psote

Saint Psote,
bishop and martyr of the land of Egypt,
you did not abandon your flock
when the hour of persecution came.
Give me a faithful heart
in the trials of my life.

You preferred to lose your life
rather than deny Christ.
Strengthen those who suffer for their faith today,
in Egypt and throughout the world,
and keep them in hope.

Watch over our bishops and priests,
make them courageous and good shepherds.
May your example teach us
to bear witness to the Gospel without fear.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Psote

- On his feast day, December 21.
- For the Christians of Egypt and the East.
- For Christians persecuted because of their faith.
- For bishops facing hostility or threats.
- When courage is needed to remain faithful.

A prayer for persecuted Christians

> *Lord, support those who suffer for your name.*
> *Saint Psote, pray for them. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Psote from December 13 to 21, and read the life of Saint Psote.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Psote

This novena walks with Saint Psote, bishop of Psoi in Upper Egypt, martyred around 300. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. To finish it on his feast day, December 21, begin on December 13, in the heart of Advent. You can also pray it at any other time, especially for persecuted Christians.

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 Psote, pray for us." Since his life is very poorly known, the meditations rest on the essential: a bishop faithful unto martyrdom.

Day 1: An ancient Church

In Psote's time, the Gospel had long been proclaimed on the banks of the Nile. Egypt was a living Christian land.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the faith of the first Christians of Egypt. Keep the Churches of the East alive.

Act of the day: Learn about the situation of the Christians of Egypt today.

Day 2: Called to be a shepherd

Psote was chosen to be bishop of Psoi. He received the task of watching over a community.

Prayer: Lord, bless those you call to be shepherds, and give them a heart like yours.

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

Day 3: The hour of trial

The persecutions struck Egypt with violence. Churches were destroyed and the Scriptures burned.

Prayer: Lord, when trial comes, do not let my faith go out.

Act of the day: Read a passage of the Gospel, grateful for the freedom to read it.

Day 4: Staying with the flock

Bishops were targeted first. Psote did not shirk his responsibility.

Prayer: Jesus, Good Shepherd, never let me abandon those entrusted to me.

Act of the day: Check on someone for whom you are responsible.

Day 5: Before the governor

Arrested, Psote was brought before the governor of Ptolemais. He had to answer for his faith.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, put the right words on my lips when I must give an account of my hope.

Act of the day: Bear simple witness to your faith before someone.

Day 6: Refusing to deny

He was asked to sacrifice to the gods. He refused: Christ was his only Lord.

Prayer: Lord, free me from the idols of my time, and keep me wholly yours.

Act of the day: Give up something that takes too much room in your life.

Day 7: The gift of his life

Psote was beheaded. Like Christ, he gave his life for those he loved.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you who gave your life for us, teach me to give mine every day.

Act of the day: Make a quiet sacrifice for someone who is suffering.

Day 8: Martyrs today

Christians in Egypt and elsewhere still give their lives for Christ. Psote is their elder brother.

Prayer: Lord, console the families of today's martyrs and convert the hearts of persecutors.

Act of the day: Support a charity that helps persecuted Christians.

Day 9: In the light of Christmas

His feast falls a few days before Christmas. The Christ who comes is the one for whom Psote gave his life.

Prayer: Come, Lord Jesus. Through the intercession of Saint Psote, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass and pray for the Church in Egypt.

Closing prayer

Saint Psote,
faithful shepherd and martyr of Christ,
you gave your life rather than deny your faith.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Support persecuted Christians,
and give me the courage to bear witness.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

You can also pray the prayer to Saint Psote and read the life of Saint Psote.

Credits and sources

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