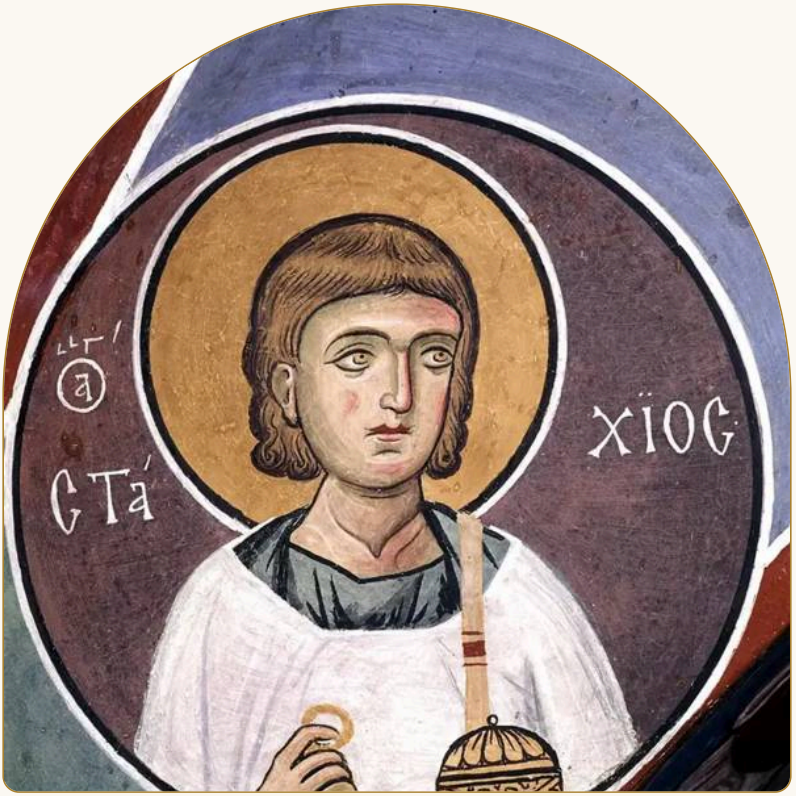


BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Stachys

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: October 31

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IN BRIEF

Saint Stachys

First-century disciple greeted by Saint Paul, first bishop of Byzantium according to tradition.

Feast day	October 31
Died	54 (according to tradition)
Era	1st century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Stachys for Christian Unity

Novena to Saint Stachys

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Stachys

Saint Stachys was a first-century Christian whom Byzantine tradition honors as the first bishop of Byzantium, the city later known as Constantinople, ordained by the apostle Andrew. His name appears only once in the New Testament, among the greetings at the end of Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans, and it is not certain that the Stachys of Paul and the bishop of Byzantium are the same man. Counted among the Seventy disciples of the Lord, he is celebrated on October 31.

Who was Saint Stachys?

At the end of his Letter to the Romans, Paul greets a long list of Christians in Rome by name. Among them we read: "Salute Urbanus, our helper in Christ Jesus, and Stachys, my beloved" (Romans 16:9, Douay-Rheims). The Greek name *Stachys* means "ear of grain." That is all Scripture tells us about him: he was a believer dear to the apostle, and his presence in the list shows how alive the Roman community already was around the year 57.

Later traditions, especially in the Christian East, filled out his story. They place him among the Seventy disciples whom Christ sent out on mission (Luke 10), and they always link him with other names from the same page of Paul's letter: Ampliatus, Urbanus, Apelles, Aristobulus and Narcissus. It is hard to say how much of this comes from historical memory and how much from devout reconstruction.

Key dates

- **38**: According to Byzantine tradition, the apostle Andrew ordains him bishop of Byzantium.

- **38-54**: According to the same tradition, a sixteen-year episcopate in Byzantium.
- **54**: Traditional date of his death; a certain Onesimus is said to have succeeded him.
- **c. 57**: Paul greets a Stachys, "my beloved," in his Letter to the Romans.
- **330**: Byzantium becomes Constantinople, capital of the Roman Empire.

The first bishop of Byzantium?

In the first century, Byzantium was only a medium-sized Greek town on the Bosphorus. It became the capital of the Empire, under the name Constantinople, only in 330. When its Church grew in prestige in the fourth and fifth centuries, Christians looked for an apostolic origin comparable to that of Rome, founded on Peter and Paul. Tradition turned to Andrew, the brother of Peter and the "First-Called" of the apostles, who was said to have preached around the Black Sea. Andrew, it was said, founded the see of Byzantium and ordained Stachys as its first bishop.

The lists of bishops that grew out of this tradition were written down long after the events, and historians consider the earliest names on them unreliable. The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople still places Stachys at the head of its bishops, after the apostle Andrew. According to this tradition he governed the Church of Byzantium for sixteen years, from 38 to 54, and was followed by a certain Onesimus.

Those dates belong to the tradition, not to verifiable history. They are also hard to reconcile with the Letter to the Romans, which places a Stachys in Rome around 57, three years after the traditional date of the bishop's death. This is why careful writers do not affirm that Paul's friend and the bishop of Byzantium are the same person. Both, however, are honored under the same name and on the same feast.

Relics and places of memory

One tradition says that the relics of Stachys, together with those of companions named by Paul, were laid to rest in Constantinople near a spring. Another tradition, reported by the Greek historian Dorotheus, says he rests in Crete, beneath the first episcopal church of Argyroupoli, in caves where the apostle Andrew is said to have built an altar. These accounts contradict each other. What they show above all is how attached the Greek Churches were to this disciple of the very first generation.

In the Orthodox Churches he is also remembered on January 4, with the whole company of the Seventy disciples.

What can we ask Saint Stachys for?

Saint Stachys has no traditional patronage in the Western Church. Still, his story suggests two natural intentions. Because he is honored by both the Church of Rome, in whose community Paul greeted him, and the Church of Constantinople, which counts him as its first bishop, he is a fitting intercessor for unity between Catholics and Orthodox. And because Paul calls him simply "my beloved," he can be asked to pray for friendships that grow in faith and for all who work quietly in the service of the Gospel.

Symbols and how to recognize Saint Stachys in art

Stachys appears mainly in Eastern art. In icons and frescoes he is shown as a bishop in Byzantine vestments, with the white stole marked with crosses that Eastern bishops wear, often holding a Gospel book. He is sometimes painted next to the apostle Andrew, a reminder of the tradition that Andrew ordained him. A well-known example is the twelfth-century fresco in the church of Panagia tou Arakos at Lagoudera, in Cyprus, where he appears among the bishops on the sanctuary arch. There is no fixed personal emblem for him, so an inscription with his name is usually the surest way to identify him.

What his holiness teaches

Of Stachys we know for certain only a name and an affection: the affection of Paul, who calls him "my beloved." That is enough to say what matters most in Christian holiness. It is not first a remarkable achievement, but a life given to Christ within a community.

His figure also reminds us that the Gospel was handed on by a crowd of disciples whose names are almost forgotten. Their faithfulness made possible the faith of the generations after them, including our own. Like an ear of grain in a large field, Stachys stands for all those unnamed believers.

Where to pray to Saint Stachys

The memory of Saint Stachys is kept mainly in the Greek-speaking Churches. In Istanbul, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, successor of the ancient Church of Byzantium, honors him as the first bishop of its line. In Crete, the tradition of Argyroupoli connects him with the town's first episcopal church. In Cyprus, the fresco of Lagoudera preserves his image. Anywhere in the world, he can be remembered on October 31, and with the Seventy disciples on January 4 in the Orthodox calendar.

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

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Stachys for Christian Unity

There is no widely known traditional prayer to Saint Stachys in English. Saintspedia offers this original prayer, inspired by the single line in which Saint Paul calls him "my beloved" and by the tradition that honors him as the first bishop of Byzantium. It can be prayed on his feast, October 31, or at any time for Christian unity and for faithful friendship.

Prayer to Saint Stachys for Christian unity

Saint Stachys, beloved friend of the apostle Paul, you belonged to the first generation of those who heard the Gospel and handed it on. Your name is written in Scripture only once, yet God knows your whole life.

Teach me to be content with being known and loved by him, without seeking to be noticed. Help me to serve in my parish and my family with the quiet faithfulness of the first disciples.

You are honored by the Church of Rome, where Paul greeted you, and by the Church of Constantinople, which counts you as its first bishop. Pray for the unity of all Christians, for Catholics and Orthodox, so that the one Church of Christ may breathe again with both lungs.

You whose name means "ear of grain," pray that the seed of the Word may bear fruit in me, in those I love, and in the young Churches of today.

I entrust to you my intention: (name it in silence). Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

This prayer is an original text by Saintspedia, free to use for personal and community prayer.

When to pray this prayer

- On October 31, the feast of Saint Stachys, or on January 4, when the Orthodox Churches remember the Seventy disciples.
- During the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (January 18-25), or on November 30, the feast of Saint Andrew, patron of the Church of Constantinople.
- For a friend in faith, or for someone who serves the Church without being seen.
- For Christians in Turkey and in the lands of the ancient Byzantine Empire.

A prayer from Scripture

Saint Paul ended his Letter to the Romans, the letter in which he greeted Stachys, with a doxology that we can make our own:

> *"Now to him that is able to establish you, according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ... to God the only wise, through Jesus Christ, to whom be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." (Romans 16:25, 27, Douay-Rheims)*

To learn more about him, read the life of Saint Stachys, or pray the novena to Saint Stachys.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Stachys

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by what Scripture and tradition tell us of Saint Stachys. It is not an official liturgical text. To end it on his feast day, October 31, begin on October 23. It can also be prayed at any time of year, especially for Christian unity, for a friend, or for those who hand on the faith without being noticed.

We know very little about Stachys: a single line in Saint Paul's Letter to the Romans, and a tradition that makes him the first bishop of Byzantium, ordained by the apostle Andrew. These nine days do not try to fill the silence with stories. They take the few things we know and let them speak, day after day: a name that means "ear of grain," a friendship with Paul, a place among the Seventy disciples, and the long memory of the Churches of East and West.

How to pray this novena

Each day, place your intention before God, read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. The suggested act helps you carry the prayer into your day. If you miss a day, simply continue: a novena is a path of trust, not a performance. You can pray it alone, with your family, or with a parish group.

Day 1: A name written once

The name of Stachys appears only once in the Bible, in a list of greetings. Yet it is there, in the Word of God, kept for every generation. God does not forget the small and the hidden.

Prayer: Lord, you know my name and you call me by it. Let it be enough for me to be known by you.

Today: Do one good thing in secret, without telling anyone.

Day 2: "My beloved"

Paul does not describe Stachys's work or gifts. He simply calls him "my beloved." Christian friendship is a place where God's love becomes visible.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the friends who have helped me believe. Bless them and keep them close to you.

Today: Write or call a friend who has supported your faith, and thank them.

Day 3: An ear of grain

The name Stachys means "ear of grain." Jesus spoke of the seed that falls into the ground and bears fruit. Every faithful life is part of a harvest it does not see.

Prayer: Lord of the harvest, let your Word take root in me and bear fruit in its season.

Today: Read the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-23) slowly.

Day 4: Among the Seventy

Tradition counts Stachys among the Seventy disciples whom Jesus sent out two by two, with no purse and no bag, to announce that the Kingdom of God was near (Luke 10).

Prayer: Lord Jesus, send me where you want, lightly and with confidence, to bring your peace.

Today: Bring a word of peace to someone you meet.

Day 5: A community at prayer

Paul's greetings to the Romans list men and women, slaves and free, households and coworkers. Stachys belonged to a living community, not a solitary path.

Prayer: Lord, make my parish a family where each person is known and loved.

Today: Greet by name someone at church you do not usually speak to.

Day 6: Sent by Andrew

According to Byzantine tradition, the apostle Andrew, the "First-Called," ordained Stachys bishop of Byzantium. Andrew had brought his brother Peter to Jesus; he went on bringing others.

Prayer: Lord, as Andrew led others to you, let me lead someone a step closer to you.

Today: Invite someone to pray with you or to come to Mass.

Day 7: The patience of beginnings

In the first century, Byzantium was an ordinary town. No one could guess that its small Church would one day be the heart of a great Christian empire. God works through humble beginnings.

Prayer: Lord, give me patience with small beginnings, in my life and in the Church.

Today: Start one small good habit and keep it for a week.

Day 8: One Church, two lungs

Stachys is honored both in Rome and in Constantinople. His memory belongs to Catholics and Orthodox alike, a sign of the unity that Christ desires for his disciples.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you prayed "that they all may be one." Heal the divisions among Christians.

Today: Pray for the Pope and for the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople.

Day 9: The unnamed witnesses

For one Stachys whose name we know, there were thousands of believers whose names are lost. They handed on the faith that reached us. Today we give thanks for all of them.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for all who passed on the faith to me, known and unknown. Make me a faithful link in that chain.

Today: Pray for the person who first taught you to pray.

Closing prayer

Saint Stachys, beloved of the apostle Paul, disciple of the first generation, you received the Gospel and handed it on. Pray for us, that we may be faithful in small things and generous in friendship. Pray for the unity of the Churches of East and West, which honor you together. Present to the Lord the intention of this novena, and help us to welcome his answer with trust, even when it comes slowly, like grain that ripens in its season. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

To learn more, read the life of Saint Stachys and the prayer to Saint Stachys.

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