

BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Suliac

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: November 8

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IN BRIEF

Saint Suliac

Welsh prince turned monk, abbot of Meifod, founder of a monastery on the Rance in Brittany.

Feast day	November 8, October 1 (diocese of Quimper and Léon)
Born	6th century, kingdom of Powys (Wales)
Died	c. 640, Saint-Suliac, on the banks of the Rance (Brittany)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	7th century

In this booklet

Life

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Church of Saint-Suliac

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Suliac

Saint Suliac, also called Suliau or Sulien in Brittany, is identified by tradition with Saint Tysilio, a Welsh prince of the kingdom of Powys who became a monk in the sixth century. Abbot of Meifod in Wales, he is said to have crossed to Armorica around 615 and founded a monastery on the banks of the Rance, where the village of Saint-Suliac now stands, in Ille-et-Vilaine. He died there around 640. His feast day is November 8, and October 1 in the diocese of Quimper and Léon.

Who was Saint Suliac?

Suliac belongs to the great family of saints who came from Great Britain to Armorican Brittany in the sixth and seventh centuries, like Saint Samson or Saint Paul Aurelian. In Wales he is called Tysilio, son of King Brochwel of Powys. In Brittany, his name gave Saint-Suliac, Sizun, Plussulien and many place names.

His life is known from late Welsh and Breton traditions, gathered long after his death. Not all its details can therefore be established with certainty, and the identification of the Welsh Tysilio with the Breton Suliac itself rests on tradition. What is certain is the age and extent of his veneration, on both sides of the Channel.

Key dates

- **6th century**: Born into the royal family of Powys, in eastern Wales, the second son of King Brochwel and Queen Arddun.
- **Youth**: Against his father, who destines him for arms, he flees to become a monk at Meifod, under Abbot Gwyddfarch.

- **Following years**: He lives seven years as a hermit on a small island in the Menai Strait, today Ynys Tysilio, and preaches on Anglesey.
- **Return to Meifod**: He becomes abbot of the monastery, which he restores and enlarges.
- **c. 613-615**: After the death of his brother, the widowed queen wishes to marry him; he refuses and must flee persecution.
- **c. 615**: He crosses to Armorica, after a stop on the island of Sark, and settles on the banks of the Rance.
- **c. 640**: Dies in his monastery, at an advanced age.

The prince who wanted to be a monk

Tysilio grew up at the court of Powys. His father, King Brochwel, wanted to make him a warrior. But the young prince desired to give himself to God. He left the court in secret and placed himself under the protection of the abbot of Meifod, who received him as a monk. The king tried to take him back, then finally accepted his choice.

To live in greater seclusion, Tysilio became a hermit on a small island in the Menai Strait, which separates the island of Anglesey from the rest of Wales. He stayed there seven years, praying and proclaiming the Gospel to the people of Anglesey. The island still bears his name, and its church was rebuilt in the fourteenth century. Returning to Meifod, he became abbot and made the monastery one of the great religious centers of Powys. Many churches in Wales bear his name, in the form Llandysilio.

Exile in Brittany

Around 613-615, his brother, King Iago, died. According to tradition, his sister-in-law wanted to marry him to keep the throne. Suliac refused. Persecuted, he left Wales with a few monks. He passed through Cornwall,

where the church of Luxulyan is attributed to him, then stopped on the island of Sark before reaching Armorica.

He settled on the right bank of the Rance, not far from the present city of Saint-Malo, and founded a monastery there where some fifteen monks lived under his direction. From there he reached out to the region. He died around 640, at an advanced age. The lid of his sarcophagus can still be seen in the parish church of Saint-Suliac. A chronicle of the kings of Britain, handed down and reworked afterward, is also attributed to Tysilio, but this attribution remains debated.

Veneration and iconography

Suliac is honored with an immemorial cult, in Wales as in Brittany. His name is found in many parishes: Saint-Suliac on the Rance, Sizun in Finistère, whose parish church is dedicated to him and keeps a reliquary of 1625, Tressignaux and Plussulien in the Côtes-d'Armor, chapels at Plomodiern and Saint-Nic. His feast day is November 8, and the diocese of Quimper and Léon celebrates it on October 1.

He is shown as an abbot, with a crozier, as on the thirteenth-century granite statue kept in the church of Saint-Suliac.



The church of Saint-Suliau in Sizun, in Finistère.

What to remember about Saint Suliac

Suliac twice left everything: his father's court to follow God's call, then his country to remain faithful to his vocation as a monk. He did not give in to family pressure or to the ambitions of power. He shows that a vocation can demand courage and that exile can become fruitful. You can pray to him for those who are seeking their path in life, for those who face pressure, and for exiles.

Where to pray to Saint Suliac

- **Saint-Suliac** (Ille-et-Vilaine, France): the parish church, which keeps his tomb and his medieval statue. See the page Church of Saint-Suliac.
- **Sizun** (Finistère, France): the church of Saint-Suliau and its parish close, with a reliquary of the saint.

- **Plomodiern** (Finistère, France): the chapel of Saint-Suliau, its fountain and its calvary.
- **Meifod** (Wales): the church of Saint Tysilio, on the site of his former abbey.

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

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Suliac for Faithfulness to One's Vocation

Saint Suliac, a Welsh prince who became a monk, left his father's court to follow Christ, then his country to remain faithful to his vocation. According to tradition, he founded a monastery on the banks of the Rance, where he died around 640. This prayer is an original composition inspired by his life, not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him those who seek their vocation and those who must leave everything.

Prayer to Saint Suliac

Saint Suliac,
son of a king, you preferred Christ
to the arms and honors of the court.
You followed his call in spite of resistance,
and you found peace in the monk's life.

Hermit on your island, abbot at Meifod,
you prayed and proclaimed the Gospel.
When they tried to turn you from your vocation,
you chose exile rather than unfaithfulness.

On the banks of the Rance,
you built a house of prayer,
and your name has remained in our villages.

Pray for young people seeking their way,
for those who face pressure from their family or surroundings,
for exiles and for those who begin life again far from home.
Give us your courage and your faithfulness.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Suliac

- On his feast day, November 8, or October 1 in Finistère.
- When you are discerning a vocation or an important life choice.
- When those close to you do not understand your choice to follow Christ.
- For refugees, exiles and displaced persons.
- For Brittany, Wales and the parishes that bear his name.

A prayer of faithfulness

You can often repeat this short prayer:

> *Lord, where you call me, grant that I may go.*
> *What you ask me to leave, help me to let go.*
> *Saint Suliac, pray for me. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Suliac from October 31 to November 8, and discover the life of Saint Suliac.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Suliac

This novena is an original composition by Saintspedia, inspired by the life of Saint Suliac, or Tysilio, a Welsh prince who became a monk and the founder of a monastery on the banks of the Rance in the seventh century. It is not an official liturgical text. To end it on his feast day, November 8, begin on October 31; in Finistère, where he is celebrated on October 1, you can begin it on September 23. It is suited at any time to a discernment or a trial of exile.

How to pray this novena

Each day, begin with the Sign of the Cross and present your intention. Read the meditation, say the prayer of the day, then an Our Father, a Hail Mary and a Glory Be. End with: "Saint Suliac, pray for us." The small act of the day helps you live the novena concretely.

Day 1: A king's son

Tysilio was born a prince, at the court of Powys. He could have lived in honors. But he felt another call within him. God makes himself heard in the heart of every life, whatever its condition.

Prayer: Lord, open my heart to your call, in the midst of everything that occupies me.

Today: Take a time of silence to ask yourself what God expects of you.

Day 2: Resisting the plans of others

His father wanted to make him a warrior. Tysilio fled to become a monk. It is sometimes hard to follow God when those close to us have other plans for us.

Prayer: Lord, give me the courage to follow your call, with respect for my loved ones but without giving up your will.

Today: Pray for a young person discerning a vocation.

Day 3: The welcome at Meifod

The abbot of Meifod welcomed the young fugitive. Monasteries have always been places of welcome for those who seek God.

Prayer: Lord, bless monasteries and those who live in them. Thank you for the places where I was welcomed in the faith.

Today: Warmly welcome someone who asks you for help or a listening ear.

Day 4: Seven years on an island

Tysilio lived seven years as a hermit on a small island in the Menai Strait. There he learned to live alone with God, before serving his brothers.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to remain with you in silence, without fleeing into noise.

Today: Spend a moment alone in a church or in nature, to pray.

Day 5: Proclaiming the Gospel

From his island, he preached to the people of Anglesey. The hermit's silence did not quench his zeal for the Gospel.

Prayer: Lord, give me the boldness to speak of you, with simplicity and respect.

Today: Share with someone a word of the Gospel that has touched you.

Day 6: Serving as abbot

Back at Meifod, Tysilio became abbot and restored the monastery. The one who had sought solitude accepted the burden of leading his brothers.

Prayer: Lord, bless those who hold responsibility in the Church and in society. Make them servants.

Today: Pray for your pastor, your bishop or a leader you know.

Day 7: Refusing the temptation of power

According to tradition, the widowed queen wanted to marry him to keep the throne. Suliac refused. He did not want to betray his vocation for a crown.

Prayer: Lord, keep me faithful to my commitments, even when I am offered more comfort or power.

Today: Renew before God a commitment of your life: baptism, marriage, vocation, promise.

Day 8: Exile

Persecuted, Suliac left his country and crossed the sea to Armorica. Exile is a trial, but God accompanies those who leave.

Prayer: Lord, I entrust to you exiles, refugees and all who have had to leave their land.

Today: Support an organization that welcomes refugees, or reach out to a foreigner in your neighborhood.

Day 9: A house on the banks of the Rance

On the banks of the Rance, Suliac founded a monastery and died there around 640. His land of exile became his land of mission, and his name has remained there to this day.

Prayer: Lord, make my departures and new beginnings fruitful. Through the intercession of Saint Suliac, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Today: Thank God for a new beginning in your life that bore fruit.

Living the novena with Saint Suliac

Saint Suliac accompanies those who are at a turning point. Perhaps you are discerning a vocation, a change of life, a departure. Perhaps you are under pressure to give up what you believe is right. During these nine days, entrust this choice to him without trying to resolve everything at once. If you can, go to a church dedicated to him, in Brittany or in Wales, to pray there.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Suliac,*
> *prince turned monk, exile turned founder,*
> *you followed God's call without looking back*
> *and made your land of exile a land of prayer.*
> *Present to the Lord the intention I have carried during these nine days.*
> *Obtain for me light to choose,*
> *courage to leave when I must,*
> *and faithfulness to the end.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

PILGRIMAGE

Church of Saint-Suliac

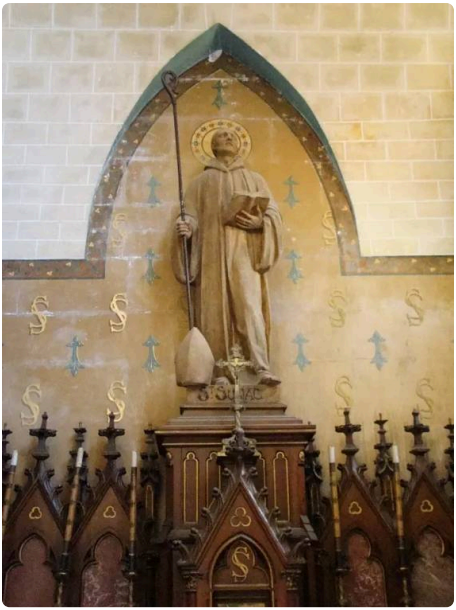
Saint-Suliac is a village in Ille-et-Vilaine set on the right bank of the Rance, between Saint-Malo and Dinan. According to tradition, Saint Suliac, a monk from Wales, founded a monastery there in the seventh century. The parish church, from the 13th and 14th centuries, keeps his tomb and a medieval statue of the saint. It is the main place of his memory in Upper Brittany.

The saint's village

The name of the village comes from the saint himself: *Sancti Suliani* is found in the 12th century. Tradition places the monastery founded by Suliac on the site of the present church. In the 12th century, Benedictines of Saint-Florent de Saumur founded a priory on the Mont-Garrot, which overlooks the Rance; its last ruins, with the chapel of Saint Lawrence, disappeared in the 19th century.

A medieval church

The church of Saint-Suliac, built in the 13th and 14th centuries, is a listed historic monument. There you see the lid of the saint's sarcophagus, set upright at the bottom of the church, and a granite statue of Saint Suliac, dated to the 13th century.



The church of Saint-Suliac, on the Rance.

Visiting Saint-Suliac

The village, with its lanes of granite houses running down to the shore, is one of the most picturesque on the banks of the Rance. A visit to the church can be extended by a walk along the shore and up to the Mont-Garrot, from which you look out over the estuary.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Suliac. Before his tomb, entrust to him a life choice, a vocation or an exiled person, then recite the prayer to Saint Suliac. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Other places of Saint Suliac

- **Sizun** (Finistère): the church of Saint-Suliau and its parish close, with a reliquary of 1625.
- **Plomodiern** (Finistère): the chapel of Saint-Suliau, its fountain and its calvary.
- **Meifod** (Wales): the church of Saint Tysilio, on the site of the abbey of which he was abbot.
- **Ynys Tysilio** (Menai Strait): the small island where he lived as a hermit.

Practical information

Saint-Suliac is about fifteen kilometers south of Saint-Malo. The village center is best explored on foot. The church is a working place of worship: modest dress and silence are requested during services. Opening hours and Mass times may vary: check with the parish or the Rance tourist office before you come.

Credits and sources

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