BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Tremeur

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: November 7

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IN BRIEF

Saint Tremeur

Young Breton martyr of the 6th century according to tradition, son of Saint Tryphine, patron of Carhaix.

Feast day	November 7
Born	6th century, Armorica (Brittany)
Died	a September 8 according to tradition, in the 6th century, Armorica (Brittany); traditional burial at Sainte-Tréphine (Côtes-d'Armor)
Canonized	immemorial cult (local Breton cult)
Era	6th century
Patron saint of	Carhaix, Camlez, Kergloff, people suffering from headaches (traditional invocation)

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Tremeur for Children and Against Headaches

Novena to Saint Tremeur

Church of Saint Tremeur, Carhaix

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Tremeur

Saint Tremeur (Trémeur in French, also called Tremorus) is a young Breton saint of the 6th century, on the border between history and legend. The son of Saint Tryphine and of the fearsome Count Conomor, raised by Saint Gildas, he is said to have been beheaded by his own father. Breton tradition honors him as a martyr and invokes him against headaches. His feast day is November 7.

Who was Saint Tremeur?

Tremeur belongs to those Breton saints whose memory has been handed down mainly through oral tradition and local devotion, without a solid historical record. He is not listed in the Roman Martyrology, but his cult is ancient and very much alive in Brittany, mainly in Upper Cornouaille, and the French calendar Nominis mentions him on November 7. The main elements of his life come from the account given in the 18th century by the Benedictine Dom Guy-Alexis Lobineau in his Life of Saint Gildas, and from the legend of Saint Tryphine, his mother. He has many names: Trémeur, Tréveur, Tromeur, Trémoré, Trémorel, Trimoël or Tréchmor.

Key dates in the life of Tremeur

- **c. 550**: His mother, Tryphine, daughter of the Vannetais chieftain Waroch, marries Conomor, count of Poher.
- **Shortly after**: According to legend, Tryphine, threatened with death by Conomor, gives birth to her son in the forest.
- **Childhood**: Baptized with the name Gildas, he receives the nickname Trec'h-meur, "great victory", to distinguish him from Saint Gildas.

- **Youth**: His mother entrusts him to the monastery of Rhuys, where Saint Gildas raises him.
- **A September 8, in the 6th century**: According to tradition, his father meets him in the countryside, one Sunday after the office, and cuts off his head.
- **After his death**: He is buried at Sainte-Tréphine, near Laniscat (Côtes-d'Armor), according to tradition.
- **1371**: A church of Saint Tremeur is built at Carhaix, on the site of a 12th-century Benedictine priory.
- **16th century**: His cult spreads in Cornouaille, as the statues and chapels dedicated to him show.

The child of Tryphine

The story of Tremeur begins with that of his mother. Tryphine, daughter of Waroch, chieftain of the Vannetais, was given in marriage, on the advice of Saint Gildas, to Conomor, count of Poher, a violent man whom legend makes into a kind of Breton "Bluebeard". Pregnant, she fled and gave birth to her son in the forest. Conomor caught up with her and killed her. The popular story adds that Saint Gildas brought her back to life.

The child was baptized Gildas, like his protector. He was later given the nickname Trec'h-meur, Breton for "great victory", to distinguish him from his master: this is the origin of the name Tremeur. His mother entrusted him to the monastery of Rhuys, on the peninsula of the same name, where Saint Gildas oversaw his education. Dom Lobineau writes that his "angelic" life was accompanied by miracles that God worked through him.

The martyrdom of a son

According to Dom Lobineau, Tremeur was killed by his father, who, finding him one Sunday after the office walking in the countryside, cut off his head. Another tradition, gathered in the Bigouden country, says that Conomor was jealous of his son's feats at soule, a traditional Breton ball game. Tradition places this death on a September 8, and locates his burial at Sainte-Tréphine, near Laniscat, in the Côtes-d'Armor.

Like his mother, Tremeur is counted among the so-called "cephalophore" saints, those shown carrying their head in their hands. This theme, frequent in hagiography, means that the martyr remains alive in God despite a violent death. It is also why Bretons have invoked him against headaches.

Devotion and art

Devotion to Saint Tremeur is widespread in Brittany, especially in Upper Cornouaille. He is the patron of Carhaix, of Camlez (Côtes-d'Armor) and of Kergloff (Finistère). Chapels are dedicated to him at Bubry, at Guerlesquin, where a fountain and a "saint's bed" are linked to his cult, at Plougastel-Daoulas, Le Guilvinec, Cléden-Cap-Sizun and Plouvorn. He is shown as a young man, often of noble rank, sometimes holding his severed head. At the doorway of the church of Carhaix, a stone statue shows him without his head, under a canopy.

He is celebrated on November 7; some sources give November 8. In the 19th century his legend inspired a Breton tale, *Tremeur, or the Headless Man*, in which he meets Saint Herbot. The town of Trémeur, in the Côtes-d'Armor, has a similar name, but without any certain link to him.

What can we learn from Saint Tremeur?

We cannot write a biography of Tremeur: his life has come down to us through stories full of wonders. But these stories say something true: a child born in violence was welcomed by the Church, raised in the faith by a saint, and remained faithful unto death. Tremeur is a saint for wounded families and for children who suffer from the violence of those close to them. You can pray to him for them, for young people, and for those who suffer from headaches.

Where to pray to Saint Tremeur

- **Carhaix-Plouguer** (Finistère): the church of Saint Tremeur, of which he is the patron.
- **Guerlesquin** (Finistère): the chapel of Saint Tremeur, its fountain and the "saint's bed".
- **Cléden-Cap-Sizun** and **Le Guilvinec** (Finistère): chapels dedicated to him.
- **Sainte-Tréphine** (Côtes-d'Armor): the place where tradition locates his burial.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Tremeur for Children and Against Headaches

Saint Tremeur, son of Saint Tryphine and Count Conomor, raised by Saint Gildas at the monastery of Rhuys, is said to have been beheaded by his own father in the 6th century. Brittany honors him as a martyr and invokes him against headaches. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him suffering children, wounded families and the sick.

Prayer to Saint Tremeur

Saint Tremeur,
child born in fear and flight,
you were welcomed by the Church
and raised in the faith by Saint Gildas.
Watch over children born in distress
and over those who grow up without protection.

You who suffered from your father's violence,
comfort abused children
and broken families.
Obtain for them peace, justice
and the grace of forgiveness.

You whom our forebears invoked against headaches,
relieve those who suffer in their bodies
and calm those whose minds are troubled.
Keep the young people of Brittany in the faith.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Tremeur

- On his feast day, November 7, or at a pardon in one of his chapels.
- When you suffer from headaches or migraines.
- For children who are victims of violence in their families.
- For young people, athletes and those who are envied for their talents.
- For reconciliation in a divided family.

A short invocation

> *Saint Tremeur, young martyr of Brittany,*
> *protect children and relieve the sick,*
> *and pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Tremeur from October 30 to November 7, and read the life of Saint Tremeur.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Tremeur

This novena is an original composition inspired by the life of Saint Tremeur, a young Breton martyr of the 6th century according to tradition. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, November 7, begin on October 30. 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 Tremeur, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely. The episodes recounted come from Breton tradition, where history and legend are mixed.

Day 1: A birth in flight

According to legend, Tryphine, threatened by Conomor, gave birth to her son in the forest. Tremeur was born in fear, like so many children today.

Prayer: Lord, protect pregnant women in danger and children born in distress.

Act of the day: Support an organization that helps mothers in difficulty.

Day 2: Baptism

The child received the name Gildas at baptism. Before being the son of Conomor, he had become a child of God.

Prayer: Father, thank you for making me your child through baptism. May I never forget this dignity.

Act of the day: Make the Sign of the Cross with holy water as you enter a church.

Day 3: A great victory

He was called Trec'h-meur, "great victory". The true victory is Christ's victory over evil and death, in which Tremeur took part.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, victor over evil, let me share in your victory in my daily struggles.

Act of the day: Fight today against one specific fault.

Day 4: Raised by a saint

His mother entrusted him to Saint Gildas, at the monastery of Rhuys. He grew up in prayer, study and community life.

Prayer: Lord, bless teachers, godparents and all who pass on the faith to the young.

Act of the day: Thank someone who helped you grow in faith.

Day 5: A life given to God

Dom Lobineau writes that his life was "angelic". While still young, Tremeur chose to live entirely for God.

Prayer: Lord, give young people the courage to give you their lives and to follow your call.

Act of the day: Pray for vocations, especially those of young people you know.

Day 6: The Lord's day

It was on a Sunday, after the office, that his father met him. Tremeur had just prayed; he died as he came out of the house of God.

Prayer: Lord, may Sunday be for me a day of prayer, rest and peace.

Act of the day: Prepare for Sunday Mass by reading the Gospel in advance.

Day 7: A father's jealousy

One tradition says that Conomor was jealous of his son's feats. Jealousy can destroy what is most sacred, even the bond between a father and his child.

Prayer: Lord, heal my heart of all jealousy and teach me to rejoice in the good of others.

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

Day 8: Wounded children

Tremeur was killed by the one who should have protected him. He is close to all children who suffer from the violence of those close to them.

Prayer: Lord, protect abused children, comfort them and give them trustworthy adults.

Act of the day: Pray for children who are victims of violence, or support a work that protects them.

Day 9: Alive in God

Tremeur is shown holding his head in his hands: violent death did not have the last word. He is alive in God, and Brittany has prayed to him for centuries.

Prayer: Lord, strengthen my hope in eternal life. Through the intercession of Saint Tremeur, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Visit a chapel or church dedicated to a Breton saint, or attend Mass.

Closing prayer

Saint Tremeur,
son of Tryphine and disciple of Gildas,
you kept the faith unto martyrdom
and you are alive with God.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Protect children and wounded families,
and relieve those who suffer.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

PILGRIMAGE

Church of Saint Tremeur, Carhaix

The church of Saint Tremeur stands in the heart of Carhaix-Plouguer, in Finistère, in central Brittany. Saint Tremeur, a young Breton martyr of the 6th century according to tradition, is the patron of the town. The church, rebuilt several times, keeps from its past a monumental 16th-century porch tower, at whose doorway the saint is represented.

A church rebuilt several times

The church of Saint Tremeur was built in 1371 on the site of a former Benedictine priory founded in the 12th century. It was then part of a collegiate church, which was destroyed in 1790, during the Revolution. The porch tower bears the dates 1529 and 1535. It was once topped by a tall granite spire, which was struck by lightning in 1575. The building suffered further from lightning afterwards. The rest of the church was entirely rebuilt in the Gothic Revival style between 1881 and 1887, to plans by the diocesan architect Ernest Le Guerranic. The porch tower has been listed as a historic monument since 1921.

What you can see

In the tympanum of the great doorway, at the base of the bell tower, a stone statue shows Saint Tremeur without his head, under a canopy, between two angels holding scrolls: it recalls the tradition of his martyrdom. Inside, a statue of the saint stands in the south chapel. The church also keeps a 15th-century granite Pietà, carved panels from the late 16th century devoted to the Blessed Sacrament, a 17th-century altar and altarpiece, and a large stained glass window installed in 2013, designed by the painter Jacques Godin on the theme of the seven days of Creation.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Tremeur. Before his statue, entrust to him suffering children, wounded families, the young people of the town and those who suffer from headaches. You can say the prayer to Saint Tremeur there. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Other places of Saint Tremeur

- **Guerlesquin** (Finistère): the chapel of Saint Tremeur, with its fountain and the "saint's bed".
- **Cléden-Cap-Sizun** (Finistère): a chapel with an altarpiece and a statue of the saint.
- **Le Guilvinec** and **Plougastel-Daoulas** (Finistère): chapels dedicated to him.
- **Sainte-Tréphine** (Côtes-d'Armor): the place where tradition locates his burial, near Laniscat.

Practical information

Carhaix-Plouguer lies in central Brittany, where Finistère, Côtes-d'Armor and Morbihan meet, and is easily reached by road. The church is a place of worship: modest dress and silence are requested, especially during services. Opening hours and Mass times may vary: check with the parish or the tourist office before you come.

Credits and sources

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