BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Trofimena

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: November 5

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IN BRIEF

Saint Trofimena

Young virgin martyr of Patti, in Sicily, c. 304, patron of Minori on the Amalfi Coast.

Feast day	November 5
Born	late 3rd century, Patti (Sicily), according to tradition
Died	c. 304, Patti (Sicily), according to tradition
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	7th century
Patron saint of	Minori

In this booklet

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Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Trofimena

Saint Trofimena (Trophimène in French) was a young virgin martyr from Patti, in Sicily, put to death according to tradition at about the age of thirteen, early in the 4th century. Her body, thrown into the sea, is said to have been carried by the waves to Minori, on the Amalfi Coast, where she has been venerated for more than a thousand years as the town's patron. Her feast day is November 5.

Who was Saint Trofimena?

Trofimena belongs to the crowd of young martyrs of the first centuries, like Saint Agatha or Saint Lucy, her fellow Sicilians. Of her life, we know almost nothing for certain. The main text concerning her is an account of the finding and translation of her relics, together with her miracles, preserved in a manuscript written in Beneventan script at the beginning of the 10th century. This document is interested above all in the history of her body and her cult at Minori, much more than in her earthly life. The details of her martyrdom come from tradition and should be received with caution. The cult itself, however, is ancient and still alive.

Key dates in the life of Trofimena

- **Late 3rd century**: Born at Patti, in Sicily, according to tradition.
- **c. 304**: At about thirteen, she is put to death for her faith, perhaps by her own father, for refusing to marry a pagan.
- **After her death**: Her body, placed in an urn, is thrown into the sea and pushed by the currents to the beach of Minori.
- **At an unknown date**: A washerwoman finds the urn; two white heifers carry it to the place where the church will stand.

- **9th century**: Her relics are at the center of episodes involving Prince Sicard of Benevento and Bishop Peter of Amalfi.
- **July 13, 839**: Her body is laid beneath the altar of her church in Minori.
- **Early 10th century**: A manuscript preserves the account of the finding, translation and miracles of the saint.
- **Night of November 26-27, 1793**: The faithful rediscover her relics, whose location had been forgotten.

A young martyr of Sicily

According to tradition, Trofimena was born at Patti, on the northern coast of Sicily, at the end of the great persecutions. A Christian, she refused to marry a pagan chosen for her. This refusal cost her her life: she died at about the age of thirteen, and tradition reports that she was killed by her own father. This dramatic detail recalls other accounts of young martyrs. Above all, it speaks of the price of a faithfulness chosen very young, against the will of her family.

From Patti to Minori

The most famous part of the story concerns what happened after her death. Her body was enclosed in an urn that was thrown into the sea. The currents carried it far from Sicily, to the beach of Minori, a small town on the Amalfi Coast. A washerwoman found it. The urn was placed on a cart drawn by two white heifers, which moved forward and then stopped dead at a certain spot and refused to go any farther. The inhabitants saw it as a sign from heaven and decided to build a church there in honor of the martyr. This is the origin of the present basilica, and the reason why Trofimena is often shown with a heifer.

Relics lost and found

In the 9th century, the relics of Trofimena became caught up in the struggles between the Lombard princes of Benevento and the city of Amalfi: the ancient account features Prince Sicard of Benevento and Bishop Peter of Amalfi. From July 13, 839, the saint's body rested beneath the altar of her chapel in Minori. Over the centuries, the exact location of the burial was forgotten.

In the mid-18th century, the rebuilding of the church gave the townspeople the desire to find their saint again. During the night of November 26-27, 1793, some of the faithful entered the church quietly, dug at the place indicated by tradition and discovered the relics. Every year Minori celebrates this anniversary on November 27, in addition to the feast of November 5 and the memory of July 13.

Devotion and art

Saint Trofimena is honored by the Catholic Church and by the Orthodox Churches. She is the patron of Minori, where her cult sets the rhythm of the town's life. She is shown as a young girl bearing the martyr's palm, often accompanied by the heifer that recalls the arrival of her relics.

What can we learn from Saint Trofimena?

The story of Trofimena says two things. The first is the strength of a very young girl who chose Christ even unto death. The second is the faithfulness of a people: for more than a thousand years, the people of Minori have kept her memory, searched for her relics and celebrated her feasts. We can pray to her for teenagers, for girls subjected to forced marriages, for families divided by faith and for seafarers.

To pray with her, see the prayer to Saint Trofimena and the novena to Saint Trofimena.

Where to pray to Saint Trofimena

- **Minori** (Amalfi Coast, Campania): the basilica of Saint Trofimena and its crypt, where her relics rest.
- **Patti** (Sicily): her hometown according to tradition.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Trofimena for Young People and Families

Saint Trofimena, a young martyr of Patti, in Sicily, gave her life for Christ at about the age of thirteen; according to tradition, the sea carried her body to Minori, on the Amalfi Coast. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to her teenagers, families and seafarers.

Prayer to Saint Trofimena

Saint Trofimena,
young girl of Sicily,
you chose Christ with all your heart
and would not deny him,
even when your family opposed you.

Support teenagers searching for their way,
girls whom others try to force,
and children whose faith is not understood.
Give them freedom and courage.

You whom the sea brought to Minori,
watch over those who sail and work at sea.
Bless the people who have kept you in their hearts,
and keep our families united in peace.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Trofimena

- On her feast day, November 5, or on November 27, anniversary of the rediscovery of her relics.
- For teenagers and young people searching for meaning.
- For girls threatened with forced marriage.
- For families divided over faith.
- For sailors, fishermen and people who live on the coast.

A short invocation

> *Saint Trofimena, virgin and martyr,*
> *keep young people in the love of Christ. Amen.*

To prepare for her feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Trofimena from October 28 to November 5, and read the life of Saint Trofimena.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Trofimena

This novena is inspired by the life of Saint Trofimena, a young martyr of Sicily venerated at Minori, on the Amalfi Coast. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on her feast day, November 5, begin on October 28. 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 Trofimena, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely. The episodes recalled come from tradition and from a 10th-century account that mixes history and legend.

Day 1: A child of Sicily

Trofimena was born at Patti, in Sicily, a land of many martyrs. She received the faith very young.

Prayer: Lord, bless children who are discovering your presence. Keep them in your love.

Act of the day: Pray for a child in your family or among those around you.

Day 2: Choosing Christ

While still a teenager, Trofimena chose Christ as the one love of her life.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, be first in my life. May nothing come before you.

Act of the day: Devote the first moment of your day to prayer.

Day 3: Refusing constraint

Others wanted to marry her to a pagan. She refused, for her life already belonged to God.

Prayer: Lord, protect girls whom others want to marry by force. Give them freedom.

Act of the day: Learn about an organization that defends girls at risk.

Day 4: Alone before her own

Tradition says that her own father put her to death. It is painful not to be understood by one's own family.

Prayer: Lord, console those whose faith divides their family. Bring peace into our homes.

Act of the day: Take a step toward reconciliation with a family member.

Day 5: Entrusted to the sea

Her body was thrown into the sea in an urn. What looked like abandonment became the beginning of a long journey.

Prayer: Lord, when all seems lost, teach me to abandon myself to your providence.

Act of the day: Entrust to God a situation that is beyond your control.

Day 6: A humble washerwoman

It was a washerwoman, at work on the beach of Minori, who found the urn. God often makes use of the humblest.

Prayer: Lord, bless those who do modest work. Open my eyes to the signs you place on my path.

Act of the day: Thank someone whose work goes unnoticed.

Day 7: The heifers stop

The two white heifers stopped and refused to go on. The townspeople understood that a church must be built there.

Prayer: Lord, help me to recognize where you want me to stop and to build.

Act of the day: Visit the Blessed Sacrament in a nearby church.

Day 8: A faithful people

For centuries, the people of Minori kept her memory, to the point of rediscovering her relics in 1793.

Prayer: Lord, bless the parishes that keep the memory of the saints alive. Make us a faithful people.

Act of the day: Pray for your parish and for those who keep it alive.

Day 9: Virgin and martyr

Trofimena gave her whole life to Christ, and Christ welcomed her into his glory.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to love you to the end. Through the intercession of Saint Trofimena, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass if possible, and pray for young persecuted Christians.

Closing prayer

Saint Trofimena,
virgin and martyr of Sicily,
you whom the sea carried to Minori,
you loved Christ more than your own life.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Keep young people in the faith
and our families in peace.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

PILGRIMAGE

Basilica of Saint Trofimena, Minori

The basilica of Saint Trofimena stands in Minori, a small town on the Amalfi Coast, in the province of Salerno, in Campania. It is the heart of the town's religious life and keeps, in its crypt, the relics of Saint Trofimena, a young Sicilian martyr whose body, according to tradition, was carried by the sea to this very beach. For the people of Minori, it is the home of their patron saint.

A church born of a sign

The ancient account tells that a washerwoman found on the beach the urn containing the martyr's body. Placed on a cart drawn by two white heifers, the urn was led through the town until the animals stopped and refused to go on. This was seen as a sign: that was where the church must stand. On July 13, 839, the saint's body was laid beneath the altar of her chapel. Over the centuries, the church was transformed and enlarged, so much so that the exact location of the burial was eventually forgotten.

In the mid-18th century, the rebuilding of the church began, giving rise to the present building. During the night of November 26-27, 1793, some of the faithful dug at the place indicated by tradition and found the relics. Since then, Minori has celebrated this anniversary every November 27.

What you can see

The basilica, the result of the rebuilding begun in the 18th century, stands in the center of the small town, a few steps from the seafront. Its crypt holds the relics of Saint Trofimena: it is the most intimate place of prayer in the building, where the faithful come to entrust their intentions to their patron. Images of the saint, with the martyr's palm and the heifer, recall her story.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Trofimena. In the crypt, take a moment of silence to entrust to her young people, families and seafarers, then say the prayer to Saint Trofimena. If you can, take part in one of the saint's feasts, on November 5, July 13 or November 27, which bring the whole town together. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Other places of Saint Trofimena

- **Patti** (Sicily, province of Messina): her hometown according to tradition.
- **The beach of Minori**: the place where, according to the account, the urn was found by a washerwoman.
- **Amalfi**: the neighboring town, whose bishop is involved in the early history of her relics.

Practical information

Minori lies on the Amalfi coast road, between Amalfi and Maiori. It can be reached by car, by bus from Amalfi or Salerno, or, in the summer season, usually also by boat. The basilica is a place of worship: modest dress and silence are requested, especially during Mass. Opening hours and Mass times may vary by season: check with the parish or the tourist office before you come.

Credits and sources

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