BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Tryphine

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: July 21

IN BRIEF

Saint Tryphine

Breton princess of the 6th century, mother of Saint Tremeur, a martyr according to tradition, invoked for sick children.

Feast day	July 21
Born	6th century, Armorica (Vannes region)
Died	6th century, Armorica
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century
Patron saint of	sick children

In this booklet

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Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Tryphine

Saint Tryphine (Tréphine or Triphine in French) is a Breton saint of the 6th century, on the border between history and legend. The daughter of King Waroch of the Vannes region, married around 550 to the fearsome Count Conomor, she is said to have been put to death by him while she was expecting a child, the future Saint Tremeur. Breton tradition venerates her as a martyr and protector of sick children. Her feast day is July 21.

Who was Saint Tryphine?

Tryphine is first mentioned in the 11th century, in the *Life of Saint Gildas* written by Vitalis, a monk of the abbey of Saint-Gildas de Rhuys. Her story was later developed by Breton hagiographers, such as Albert Le Grand in the 17th century, and by popular tradition. Historians think it keeps the memory of a real woman, the wife of Conomor, a well-attested Breton chieftain of the 6th century. But the details of her life, and above all the miracles surrounding it, belong to legend. Her story should therefore be read as an account of faith, handed down by generations of Bretons, rather than as a biography.

Key dates in the life of Tryphine

- **6th century**: Born in Armorica, daughter of Waroch, ruler of the Vannes region.
- **c. 550**: On the advice of Saint Gildas, she is given in marriage to Conomor, Count of Poher, to avoid a war.
- **Shortly after**: Pregnant, she flees her husband, who fears a prophecy that he will be killed by his son.
- **In the forest**: She gives birth to her son Tremeur and hides him.

- **Then**: Conomor catches up with her and beheads her, according to tradition.
- **According to legend**: Saint Gildas restores her to life; she ends her days in a convent in Vannes.
- **11th century**: First written mention, in the *Life of Saint Gildas* by the monk Vitalis.

A marriage for peace

According to the account, around 550, Waroch, ruler of the Vannes region, was threatened by Conomor, Count of Poher and master of a large part of northern Brittany. Conomor sought to extend his lands through a series of marriages. To avoid war, Saint Gildas advised Waroch to give Conomor the hand of his daughter Tryphine. The young woman accepted this marriage for the good of her people.

But Conomor had received a prophecy: he would be killed by his own son. To protect himself, the legend says, he put his wives to death as soon as they were expecting a child. Tryphine, his fourth wife, in turn became pregnant.

Flight and martyrdom

Tryphine fled. Popular tradition says she was helped by the souls of the previous wives. In the forest, she gave birth to a son, Tremeur, and hid him. Conomor caught up with her and cut off her head. This is why she is counted among the so-called "cephalophore" saints, beheaded martyrs whose legends tell of wonders linked to their heads.

Her parents recovered her body and went to see Saint Gildas, in his hermitage at Bieuzy, to remind him that he was the one who had advised this marriage. The legend says that Gildas went to Vannes, placed Tryphine's head back on

her shoulders and restored her to life. She then founded a convent in Vannes, where she ended her days in prayer. Her son Tremeur, according to other accounts, was later killed by Conomor and is also honored as a martyr.

Devotion and art

Saint Tryphine is celebrated on July 21; some sources also give July 14. Her son Saint Tremeur is celebrated on November 8. In Brittany, she is invoked for sick children and for children born after term. A village in the Côtes-d'Armor bears her name, Sainte-Tréphine. Chapels are dedicated to her, notably in Pontivy, at Trébalay in Bannalec and at Saint-Aignan (Morbihan), where a pardon is held in her honor.

Her story has deeply marked the Breton imagination. A mystery play in Breton, *Saint Tryphine and King Arthur*, was collected by François-Marie Luzel. The story has also been compared with the tale of Bluebeard, and it inspired Anatole Le Braz and the painter Paul Sérusier.

What can we learn from Saint Tryphine?

Beyond the legend, Tryphine is the figure of a mother who protects her child's life at the cost of her own. She accepted a marriage for the sake of peace, she suffered the violence of a husband, and she did everything to save her son. Breton tradition saw in her a protector of sick children and anxious mothers. You can pray to her for women who suffer domestic violence, for mothers expecting a child in fear, and for sick children.

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

Where to pray to Saint Tryphine

- **Sainte-Tréphine** (Côtes-d'Armor): the village that bears her name.

- **Pontivy** (Morbihan): the chapel of Sainte-Tréphine.
- **Saint-Aignan** (Morbihan): her chapel and her pardon.
- **Bannalec** (Finistère): the chapel of Trébalay, of which she is the patron.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Tryphine for Sick Children

Saint Tryphine, a Breton princess of the 6th century, was according to tradition put to death by her husband Conomor after saving her child, the future Saint Tremeur. Brittany invokes her for sick children. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to her sick children, anxious mothers and women who suffer violence.

Prayer to Saint Tryphine

Saint Tryphine,
daughter of Brittany and courageous mother,
you accepted a marriage for the peace of your people,
and you gave everything to save your child.
Watch over mothers who fear for their little ones.

You whom our forebears invoked
for sick and fragile children,
present to the Lord those who suffer,
those born too early or too late,
and obtain health for them, if it is his will.

Protect women who suffer violence,
give them a refuge and faithful friends.
Teach us to defend life
with gentleness and courage.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Tryphine

- On her feast day, July 21, or at a pardon in her honor.
- For a sick child.
- During an anxious pregnancy.
- For a woman suffering domestic violence.
- For peace in families.

A short invocation

> *Saint Tryphine, mother of Saint Tremeur,*
> *watch over our children and pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for her feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Tryphine from July 13 to 21, and read the life of Saint Tryphine.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Tryphine

Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It draws on the Breton tradition about Saint Tryphine, mother of Saint Tremeur, invoked for sick children. To finish it on her feast day, July 21, begin on July 13. 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 Tryphine, pray for us." The act suggested each day helps you live the novena concretely. The story of Tryphine is largely legendary: the meditations look above all for its message of faith.

Day 1: A daughter of Brittany

Tryphine was the daughter of Waroch, ruler of the Vannes region. She grew up in a Brittany where the Christian faith was taking root.

Prayer: Lord, bless our land and those who hand on the faith there.

Act of the day: Pray for your region and those who govern it.

Day 2: A marriage for peace

To avoid a war, Tryphine agreed to marry Conomor, on the advice of Saint Gildas.

Prayer: Lord, make me a peacemaker, even when it costs me.

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

Day 3: Fear at home

According to the legend, Conomor put his wives to death as soon as they were expecting a child. Tryphine lived in fear.

Prayer: Lord, protect women who are afraid in their own homes.

Act of the day: Pray for women who suffer domestic violence.

Day 4: Carrying life

When she was pregnant, Tryphine chose to protect the child she was carrying, whatever the cost.

Prayer: Lord, bless pregnant women and the children they carry.

Act of the day: Pray for a mother-to-be.

Day 5: The flight

Tryphine fled into the forest. There she gave birth to her son Tremeur and hid him to save him.

Prayer: Lord, be with those who must flee to protect their children.

Act of the day: Support, with a gift or a prayer, a charity that welcomes mothers in distress.

Day 6: The gift of self

Caught by Conomor, Tryphine was put to death. She had given her life for her son.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you who gave your life for us, teach me to love without counting the cost.

Act of the day: Do a favor that costs you something.

Day 7: Life stronger than death

The legend says that Saint Gildas restored Tryphine to life. This wonderful story expresses faith in the resurrection.

Prayer: Lord, strengthen my faith in eternal life.

Act of the day: Pray for a departed member of your family.

Day 8: A life of prayer

According to tradition, Tryphine ended her days in a convent in Vannes, in prayer.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to find peace in you after trials.

Act of the day: Take ten minutes of silence and prayer.

Day 9: For sick children

For centuries, Bretons have entrusted their sick children to Tryphine.

Prayer: Lord, through the intercession of Saint Tryphine, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will, and relieve children who suffer.

Act of the day: Pray for a sick child, or support a family going through this trial.

Closing prayer

Saint Tryphine,
courageous and faithful mother,
you protected your child at the cost of your life.
Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.
Watch over our children, over mothers and families,
and keep us in peace.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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

Credits and sources

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