BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Tuotilo

Life, prayer and novena

Feast day: March 28

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IN BRIEF

Saint Tuotilo

Monk of the abbey of Saint Gall, musician, composer and artist of the late 9th century.

Feast day	March 28
Born	c. 850
Died	c. 913-915, Abbey of Saint Gall (Switzerland)
Canonized	immemorial cult (local cult)
Era	10th century

In this booklet

Life

Prayer to Saint Tuotilo for Musicians and Artists

Novena to Saint Tuotilo

Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Tuotilo

Saint Tuotilo (also spelled Tutilo or Tutilon) was a monk of the abbey of Saint Gall, in present-day Switzerland, who died around 913 or 915. Musician, poet, composer, painter, sculptor and goldsmith, he is one of the great figures of the late Carolingian renaissance. A friend of Notker the Stammerer, he placed all his talents at the service of the praise of God. His feast day is March 28.

Who was Saint Tuotilo?

Tuotilo lived at a time when the abbey of Saint Gall was one of the most brilliant centers of culture in Europe. Its monks copied and decorated manuscripts, composed chants for the liturgy and taught in a renowned school. Tuotilo was trained there and spent his life there. We know him mainly through the monk Ekkehard IV, who wrote a chronicle of the abbey in the 11th century, the *Casus sancti Galli*. This account, written more than a century after his death, paints a lively portrait of him, but one that is sometimes embellished: it must be read with caution. Even his origin is debated: some traditions say he was born in Ireland, but many historians think he came from the Saint Gall region itself.

Key dates in the life of Tuotilo

- **c. 850**: Born; his place of origin is debated (Ireland according to some traditions, Alemannia according to others).
- **Second half of the 9th century**: He is trained at the school of the abbey of Saint Gall, with Notker and Ratpert.
- **Same period**: He studies music with the Irish monk Moengal, called Marcellus, a teacher at Saint Gall.

- **c. 895-900**: An ivory plaque carved for the cover of a great Gospel book of the abbey is attributed to him.
- **Late 9th century**: He composes tropes, chants that expand the texts of the Mass, including the Christmas introduction *Hodie cantandus est*.
- **c. 913-915**: Dies at Saint Gall; he is buried in a chapel dedicated to Saint Catherine.
- **11th century**: Ekkehard IV portrays him in the chronicle of the abbey.
- **After his death**: The chapel where he rests takes his name, a sign of the cult paid to him.

A monk of many talents

At the school of Saint Gall, Tuotilo became friends with two other pupils, Notker, later nicknamed the Stammerer, and Ratpert. The three young monks followed the teaching of renowned masters, including the Irishman Moengal, who passed on to them his love of music. Notker would become a great author of liturgical sequences, Ratpert a historian of the abbey, and Tuotilo an all-round artist.

Ekkehard describes him as a sturdy man, eloquent, with a fine voice, skilled at playing several instruments, including the harp. He taught music to the sons of noble families entrusted to the abbey. He was also a painter, sculptor and goldsmith, and the abbot often sent him traveling on the monastery's business. The chronicler adds that, despite his talents and successes, he remained a monk faithful to prayer, who did not let himself be turned away from the divine office.

The musician and the artist

Tuotilo is best known as a composer of tropes. These chants, very popular in his time, added new words and melodies to the texts of the Mass, to unfold their meaning more fully. The Christmas trope *Hodie cantandus est* ("Today

we must sing") is traditionally attributed to him. Most of his other compositions have been lost, or cannot be attributed to him with certainty.

His most famous work may be a visual one: the binding of the *Evangelium longum*, a great Gospel book made at Saint Gall toward the end of the 9th century, is made of carved ivory plaques. Ekkehard attributes one of them to Tuotilo, showing in particular the Assumption of the Virgin and an episode from the legend of Saint Gall, and the book is still kept in the abbey library. Ekkehard also credits him with works made for other churches, but they have not survived.

Devotion and memory

Tuotilo died at Saint Gall around 913 or 915. He was buried in a chapel dedicated to Saint Catherine, which later took the name of Saint Tuotilo's chapel: a sign that he was venerated as a saint. His cult has remained local, linked to the abbey and to the Benedictine tradition, and he is celebrated on March 28. He has no fixed attribute: he can be shown as a Benedictine monk, with a harp or sculptor's tools, in memory of his talents.

What can we learn from Saint Tuotilo?

Tuotilo shows that beauty can be a path to God. He placed his voice, his hands and his intelligence at the service of the liturgy, so that the prayer of the Church would be more beautiful and more alive. His talents did not draw him away from monastic life: he remained a monk, faithful to the office and to his community. You can pray to him for church musicians, cantors and organists, for artists and craftsmen, and for all who seek to serve God with their gifts.

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

Where to pray to Saint Tuotilo

- **Saint Gall** (Switzerland): the former abbey, now a cathedral, where he lived and was buried; the abbey library keeps the Gospel book he is said to have adorned.
- In any church, on March 28, his feast day, especially during a sung Mass.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Tuotilo for Musicians and Artists

Saint Tuotilo, a monk of the abbey of Saint Gall in the 9th century, was a musician, poet, composer, sculptor and goldsmith. He placed all his gifts at the service of the liturgy and the praise of God. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. It entrusts to him musicians, artists and all who wish to serve God with their talents.

Prayer to Saint Tuotilo

Saint Tuotilo,
monk of Saint Gall, friend of beauty,
you sang the glory of God
with your voice, your harp and your artist's hands.
Teach me to praise the Lord
with all that I am.

Bless church musicians, cantors and organists,
painters, sculptors and craftsmen,
all who make the house of God beautiful.
May their works lead hearts to him.

You who remained humble despite your talents
and faithful to the prayer of your brothers,
keep me from pride and distraction.
May my gifts serve the glory of God and the good of others.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Tuotilo

- On his feast day, March 28.
- Before a choir rehearsal or when preparing the liturgy.
- For musicians, composers, artists and craftsmen.
- When you begin a work that you want to offer to God.
- For monastic communities and their sung prayer.

A short invocation

> *Lord, may my whole life be a song to your glory.*
> *Saint Tuotilo, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Tuotilo from March 20 to 28, and read the life of Saint Tuotilo.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Tuotilo

This novena spends nine days with Saint Tuotilo, a monk of the abbey of Saint Gall, musician and artist of the late 9th century. Novena composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It is not an official liturgical text. To finish it on his feast day, March 28, begin on March 20. 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 Tuotilo, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely. What we know of Tuotilo comes mainly from a chronicle written more than a century after his death.

Day 1: A pupil of Saint Gall

As a young man, Tuotilo entered the school of the abbey of Saint Gall. There he learned prayer, letters and chant, following the rhythm of monastic life.

Prayer: Lord, bless schools and those who learn in them. Give young people a taste for what is beautiful and true.

Act of the day: Pray for a child or young person close to you.

Day 2: Friends in the Lord

At Saint Gall, Tuotilo became friends with Notker and Ratpert. Together they grew in faith and learning.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the friendships that bring me closer to you. Keep my friends in your grace.

Act of the day: Get in touch with a friend and pray for him or her.

Day 3: Receiving from a master

The Irish monk Moengal taught music to the young monks. Tuotilo received from him an art that he would pass on in turn.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for those who taught me what I know. Make me in turn a good teacher.

Act of the day: Thank a former teacher or a mentor who made a difference to you.

Day 4: Singing the glory of God

Tuotilo composed tropes for the Mass, such as the Christmas chant *Hodie cantandus est*. His music sought to help the assembly enter into the mystery being celebrated.

Prayer: Lord, may my prayer be a song of praise, in joy as in trial.

Act of the day: Sing or listen to a liturgical chant, taking time to meditate on its words.

Day 5: Hands at the service of God

Painter, sculptor and goldsmith, Tuotilo worked ivory and metal to adorn books and churches. His work became prayer.

Prayer: Lord, bless the work of my hands. May everything I do today be done for you.

Act of the day: Carry out an ordinary task with special care, offering it to God.

Day 6: Teaching with patience

Tuotilo taught music to the young people entrusted to the abbey. He shared his gifts instead of keeping them for himself.

Prayer: Lord, bless music teachers, choir directors and all who train young people.

Act of the day: Share a skill with someone who wants to learn.

Day 7: Remaining a monk on the road

The abbot often sent Tuotilo traveling. Everywhere he remained a monk, attached to prayer and to his community.

Prayer: Lord, keep me faithful to prayer in the midst of my activities and travels.

Act of the day: Take a moment of prayer in the middle of a busy day.

Day 8: The humility of the gifted

According to his chronicler, Tuotilo was gifted in everything, but he did not let himself be turned away from the divine office. His talents did not make him proud.

Prayer: Lord, everything I have comes from you. Keep me from pride and teach me to give you thanks.

Act of the day: Thank God for three gifts you have received, and put one of them at the service of someone else.

Day 9: Resting in peace

Tuotilo died at Saint Gall around 913 or 915. He was buried in a chapel that would bear his name. His life ended in the community he had served.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to live and die in your peace. Through the intercession of Saint Tuotilo, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass and, if possible, sing with all your heart.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Tuotilo,*
> *monk of Saint Gall, musician and artist,*
> *you offered God your voice and your hands*
> *for the beauty of the liturgy.*
> *Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *Teach me to praise him in all things*
> *and to serve my brothers and sisters with my gifts.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

Credits and sources

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