BOOKLET TO PRINT

Saint Viatre

Life, prayer, novena and pilgrimage

Feast day: August 5

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IN BRIEF

Saint Viatre

6th-century hermit of Sologne, formerly a monk of Micy, venerated at Saint-Viâtre (Loir-et-Cher).

Feast day	August 5
Born	6th century (date unknown)
Died	6th century, Tremblevy, now Saint-Viâtre (Loir-et-Cher, France)
Canonized	immemorial cult
Era	6th century
Patron saint of	invoked against fevers, Saint-Viâtre (Loir-et-Cher)

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Credits and sources

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LIFE

Saint Viatre

Saint Viatre (also spelled Viâtre) was a hermit of the Sologne region of France who lived in the 6th century. According to an account written three centuries later by the monks of Micy, near Orléans, he was one of the first monks of their abbey before withdrawing into solitude, in the village that now bears his name: Saint-Viâtre, in the Loir-et-Cher. His tomb is still venerated there, in the crypt of the church. His feast day is August 5.

Who was Saint Viatre?

Very little is known about the real life of Viatre. The account that has come down to us was written in the 9th century by the monks of the abbey of Saint-Mesmin at Micy, who wanted to link the hermit saints of the region to their own house. It must therefore be read with caution: it keeps the memory of a man of prayer who was truly venerated in Sologne, but some of its details belong to legend. What is certain is that his tomb has been honored without interruption since the early Middle Ages, that his relics have come through the centuries, and that a whole village eventually took his name. The Roman Martyrology commemorates him on August 5.

Key dates in the life of Viatre

- **6th century**: According to tradition, at about fifteen he enters a monastery governed by an abbot named Trigetus, whose location is unknown.
- **Later**: Drawn by the reputation of Abbot Mesmin, he joins the monastery of Micy, near Orléans, where he becomes a friend of the monk Avitus.
- **Afterwards**: He withdraws as a hermit into Sologne, to a place that will become the village of Tremblevy.

- **End of his life**: Sensing death approaching, he carves himself a coffin from an aspen trunk; he dies in Sologne in the 6th century.
- **9th century**: His tomb is placed in a crypt, and the monks of Micy write the account of his life.
- **1597**: The chapter of Orléans officially examines his relics and places them in a reliquary.
- **c. 1655**: A new examination of the relics takes place in the presence of Anne de Lévis de Ventadour, archbishop of Bourges.
- **French Revolution**: The reliquary is seized and destroyed, but the relics are saved.
- **1854**: The village of Tremblevy takes the name of Saint-Viâtre.

A monk trained at Micy

According to the account of the monks of Micy, Viatre turned to God very young. At about fifteen, he entered a first monastery, led by an abbot called Trigetus. Then he heard of the holiness of Abbot Mesmin, who governed the monastery of Micy, where the Loiret meets the Loire, at the gates of Orléans. He left his first community to become his disciple. At Micy, he met another monk, Avitus, with whom he formed a deep friendship. Micy was then a nursery of saints: several of its monks went on to found hermitages and monasteries in the forests of central Gaul.

The hermit of Sologne

Like other monks of Micy, Viatre eventually sought a deeper solitude. He went into Sologne, a land then covered with woods, heaths and marshes, and settled in an isolated spot that would later become a small village. There he lived by prayer, fasting and work, far from the world. The account records few events of this hidden life: his holiness shows above all in the silent faithfulness of a man who left everything for God.

Tradition has kept a moving detail about his end. Sensing that death was near, the hermit is said to have carved his own coffin from the trunk of an aspen, the tree that grows along the ponds of Sologne. He was buried in this coffin, in the church of the place. The legend goes on to say that the branches of the aspen began to grow and blossom again, until they pushed through the walls of the church. This is said to be the origin of the village's old name, Tremblevy, the village of the aspen (tremble in French).

The tomb and the relics

In the 9th century, Viatre's tomb was placed in a crypt. The following centuries show a living cult: in 1597, the chapter of Orléans officially recognized the relics and placed them in a reliquary; around 1655, a new examination took place in the presence of the archbishop of Bourges, Anne de Lévis de Ventadour. During the Revolution, the precious reliquary was seized and destroyed, but the saint's bones were preserved. In 1854, the people of Tremblevy obtained that their village should from then on be called Saint-Viâtre, a sign of the attachment of a whole population to its patron.

Saint Viatre has traditionally been invoked against fevers, which once struck the people living among the marshes of Sologne. A fountain bearing his name, decorated with his bust, recalls this popular devotion.

Devotion and art

The church of Saint-Viâtre keeps an ancient crypt where the saint's tomb lies. It also houses a polyptych from the early 16th century, attributed to the Flemish school, depicting the Passion of Christ and the life of Saint Viatre, as well as a stained-glass window in the choir showing the saint driving out the devil. He is shown as a hermit or monk, sometimes with the tree that recalls his aspen coffin. His feast is celebrated on August 5.

What can we learn from Saint Viatre?

The life of Viatre is almost entirely hidden, and that may be its lesson. He learned from a master and a friend, then chose the silence and poverty of a harsh land. The coffin carved with his own hands speaks of a man who looked death in the face, in peace, and the legend of the aspen that blossomed again speaks of the hope of the resurrection. You can pray to him for the sick, for those going through a time of loneliness, and to learn to prepare calmly for your own death.

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

Where to pray to Saint Viatre

- **Saint-Viâtre** (Loir-et-Cher): the church of Saint-Viâtre and its crypt, where his tomb lies.
- **Saint-Viâtre**: the fountain that bears his name, decorated with his bust.
- **Saint-Hilaire-Saint-Mesmin** (Loiret): the area of the former abbey of Micy, where he was a monk according to tradition.

PRAYER

Prayer to Saint Viatre for the Sick and for Those Who Are Alone

Saint Viatre, a monk trained at Micy and then a hermit in Sologne in the 6th century, lived hidden in prayer and prepared for his death in peace; his tomb is venerated at Saint-Viâtre. Prayer composed for Saintspedia, in the spirit of Church tradition. It entrusts to him the sick, those who live in loneliness and those who are approaching the end of their life.

Prayer to Saint Viatre

Saint Viatre,
you left the world in your youth
and looked for teachers to learn how to pray.
Give me a teachable heart,
one that knows how to listen and be formed.

In the woods and marshes of Sologne,
you lived alone with God,
in silence and poverty.
Help me to find God in silence
and not to fear the hours of solitude.

You who carved your coffin with your own hands
and looked upon death with trust,
teach me to prepare my passage to the Father.
You who were invoked against fevers,
watch over the sick and those who care for them.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

When to pray to Saint Viatre

- On his feast day, August 5, or during a visit to the church of Saint-Viâtre.
- For a sick person, especially when a fever will not break.
- In a time of loneliness, whether chosen or not.
- To prepare peacefully for death, or to accompany a loved one at the end of life.
- For hermits, monks and all who seek God in silence.

A short invocation

> *Lord, you who make the dry wood blossom again,*
> *give healing to the sick and hope to all.*
> *Saint Viatre, pray for us. Amen.*

To prepare for his feast, you can pray the novena to Saint Viatre from July 28 to August 5, and read the life of Saint Viatre.

NOVENA

Novena to Saint Viatre, Hermit of Sologne

This novena is inspired by the life of Saint Viatre, a monk of Micy and then a hermit in Sologne in the 6th 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, August 5, begin on July 28. You can also pray it at any other time of the year, especially for someone who is ill.

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 Viatre, pray for us." The act of the day helps you live the novena concretely. The episodes mentioned come from an account written in the 9th century by the monks of Micy, which mixes history and legend.

Day 1: Giving one's youth to God

According to tradition, Viatre entered a monastery at about fifteen. Very early, he understood that God deserved the best of his life.

Prayer: Lord, bless the young people who are seeking you. Give them the courage to answer your call.

Act of the day: Pray for a young person you know, or encourage them with a kind word.

Day 2: Looking for a teacher

Having heard of the holiness of Abbot Mesmin, Viatre left his first monastery to become his disciple at Micy. He knew that no one advances alone on the way to God.

Prayer: Lord, give me the humility to ask for advice and to let myself be guided.

Act of the day: Read a passage from a spiritual writer, or ask a priest for advice.

Day 3: The gift of friendship

At Micy, Viatre became a friend of the monk Avitus. Friendship lived in God supports faithfulness and makes the road lighter.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for my friends. Make our friendships a path toward you.

Act of the day: Get in touch with a friend you have somewhat neglected.

Day 4: Going into the desert

Viatre left the community for the solitude of the woods of Sologne. He was not running away from others: he wanted to stand wholly before God.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to be silent so as to listen to you, even in the middle of my activities.

Act of the day: Take ten minutes of silence, without screens, to pray.

Day 5: A harsh land

The Sologne of old was a land of marshes, heaths and fevers. Viatre chose to live there and to pray for its people.

Prayer: Lord, I entrust to you those who live in hard conditions. Help me to help them.

Act of the day: Make a gift or a concrete gesture for someone in difficulty.

Day 6: Against fever

Saint Viatre was long invoked against the fevers of the marshes. The sick found in him a close intercessor.

Prayer: Lord, heal the sick I entrust to you, and give patience to those who suffer.

Act of the day: Visit or call someone who is ill.

Day 7: Fighting evil

A stained-glass window in the church of Saint-Viâtre shows the hermit driving out the devil. Life in the desert is also a struggle against evil and against oneself.

Prayer: Lord, deliver me from evil and strengthen me in temptation.

Act of the day: Identify a bad habit and take one small step to fight it.

Day 8: The aspen coffin

Sensing his death approaching, Viatre carved himself a coffin from an aspen trunk. He looked upon death without fear, as a passage to God.

Prayer: Lord, grant me to live each day with my thoughts on you, and one day to fall asleep in your peace.

Act of the day: Pray for those who are dying today and for your departed.

Day 9: The wood that blossoms again

The legend says that the branches of the aspen began to blossom again through the walls of the church. This sign speaks of Christian hope: life is stronger than death.

Prayer: Lord, make what is dry in me blossom again. Through the intercession of Saint Viatre, grant me the grace I ask in this novena, if it is your will.

Act of the day: Attend Mass and, if possible, bring flowers to a grave or a church.

Living the novena with Saint Viatre

Viatre spoke little and did little in the eyes of the world. Yet his life hidden in God marked a whole region, so much so that a village bears his name. During these nine days, you can carry the sick, those who are alone, the dying and those who seek God in silence. If you can, go to the church of Saint-Viâtre to pray near his tomb.

Closing prayer

> *Saint Viatre,*
> *hermit of Sologne and friend of God,*
> *you sought the Lord in silence*
> *and awaited his coming in peace.*
> *Present to the Lord the intention I have entrusted to you.*
> *Watch over the sick and those who are alone,*
> *and keep me in hope.*
> *Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

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

PILGRIMAGE

Church of Saint-Viâtre

The church of Saint-Viâtre stands in the heart of the village of Saint-Viâtre, in Sologne, in the Loir-et-Cher department and the diocese of Blois. It was here, according to tradition, that the hermit Viatre lived and died in the 6th century, and it is here that his tomb has been venerated since the early Middle Ages, in an ancient crypt. The building has been listed as a historic monument since 2006.

A church built around a tomb

The account of Viatre's life, written in the 9th century by the monks of Micy, says that he was buried in the church of the place, in a coffin he had carved himself from an aspen trunk. The village was long called Tremblevy, the village of the aspen, before taking the name of its saint in 1854. In the 9th century, the tomb was placed in a crypt, which remains the heart of the sanctuary. The relics were officially recognized by the chapter of Orléans in 1597, then around 1655 in the presence of the archbishop of Bourges. During the Revolution, the reliquary was destroyed, but the relics were saved.

What you can see

The early crypt holds the tomb of Saint Viatre. In the church, the nave has a wooden ceiling and is lit by Renaissance stained glass. A polyptych from the early 16th century, attributed to the Flemish school, depicts the Passion of Christ and scenes from the saint's life. In the choir, a more recent stained-glass window shows Saint Viatre driving out the devil. From outside, you will notice the bell tower topped by an octagonal spire twisted at its tip, a "twisted spire" that makes the village known. In the village, a fountain decorated with the saint's bust recalls the popular devotion that invoked him against fevers.

Praying on site

Before you come, you can read the life of Saint Viatre. In the crypt, near the tomb, entrust to him the sick, those who are alone and those approaching the end of their life, then say the prayer to Saint Viatre. A stop at the fountain is a good way to extend this time of prayer. August 5, his feast day, is a particularly fitting moment for this pilgrimage. These suggestions are offered by Saintspedia.

Practical information

Saint-Viâtre lies in Grande Sologne, in the east of the Loir-et-Cher, about twenty kilometers from Romorantin-Lanthenay and not far from Lamotte-Beuvron and Salbris. The church belongs to the parish group of Lamotte-Beuvron. Opening times and Mass times may vary: check with the parish or the town hall before your visit. The church is a place of prayer: silence and modest dress are requested.

Credits and sources

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