

Saint Denis  
(Martyr)  
7 October



### About Saint Denis [- 258]

Like so many saints from the early Church, we don't have a lot of concrete facts about Saint Denis. He was the bishop of Paris during the third century. He was martyred during the persecution of the Emperor Decius.

We understand that he came to Gaul from Rome, settling in Paris on the Ile de la Cité in the River Seine, where he built a church, arranged the regular celebration of Mass, and preached the Gospel. According to Saint Gregory of Tours, Saint Denis was beheaded with a sword on Montmartre, the highest hill in Paris, which may have been a Druidic holy place. Local tradition holds that the martyrdom of Saint Denis gave the hill its name.

After his death, his body and those of his companions, Saints Eleutherius and Rusticus (who were also clergymen), were recovered by the Christian community and buried.

Since Saint Denis was martyred with a beheading, he is often portrayed decapitated, vested in bishops vestments and holding his own head.

He is the patron saint of France, the city of Paris. He is invoked against headaches, rabies and demonic possession.

### What can we learn from Saint Denis' life?

Although we do not know a great deal about Saint Denis and his companions, we do know that he left his homeland to preach the Gospel. We also know that he organized the Church in Paris and that he was unwavering in his faith.

Let us not pass by an opportunity to proclaim the Gospel. We can do this in a variety of ways, but mostly by our kind words and good actions, will people know that we love Christ and our neighbour.

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### Collect

O God, who sent Saint Denis and his companions to preach your glory to the nations and strengthened them for their mission with the virtue of constancy in suffering, grant, we pray, that we may imitate them in disdaining prosperity in this world and in being undaunted by any trial. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

### Gospel Matthew 5:13-16

#### Your light must shine in the sight of men

Jesus said to his disciples:

**'You are the salt of the earth.**

But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again?

It is good for nothing,

and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men.

**'You are the light of the world.**

A city built on a hill-top cannot be hidden.

No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub;

they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house.

In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men,

so that, seeing your good works,

**they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'**

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### Antiphon

It is you who have stood by me in my trials;  
and I confer a kingdom on you, says the Lord,  
that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom.

### Hymn for the Feast of St Denis

Saint Denis from your home in Rome  
you went to the land of Gaul  
to preach the name of Jesus Christ,  
a task that was in no way small.

As Bishop of Paris you were  
called to shepherd the flock and lead  
those people placed within your care  
professing faith in the one Creed.

You and your two companions  
**were martyrs to the sword's sharp blade**  
because you claimed Christ as your God,  
and facing death were not afraid.

O Lord, may we follow these men,  
and to you faithful ever be,  
in time of trial and great joy  
for you alone will set us free.

LM 88.88 (Possible tune: CWBII #613)

### Other Music Suggestions:

Lift High the Cross

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Universalis App: 9 October 2020