

130// HERE FOLLOWETH THE LIFE OF ST. GILES

St. Giles was born in Athens, and was of noble lineage and royal kindred. And in his childhood he was informed in holy lettrure.

The Miracle of St. Giles's Coat

And on a day as he went to the church, he found a sick man which lay all sick in the way and demanded alms of St. Giles, which gave him his coat. And as soon as he clad him withal he received full and entire health.

Jesus Christ His Heir

And after that, anon his father and his mother died, and rested in our Lord, and then St. Giles made Jesu Christ heir of his heritage.

Giles in English, and Egidius in Latin. And it is said of E, that is without, and geos, that is the earth, and dya, that is clear or godly. He was without earth, by despising of earthly things, clear by enlumining of science, divine or godly by love, which assembleth the lover to him that is loved.

St. Giles and the Serpent

On a time as he went to the church a man was smitten with a serpent and died, and Giles came against this serpent, and made his orison, and chased out of him all the venom.

He Cures a Demoniac

There was a man which was demoniac in the monastery with other people, and troubled them that heard the service of God. Then Giles conjured the devil that was in his body, and anon he issued out, and anon he was all whole.

He Travels to Arles

Then Giles doubted the peril of the world, and went secretly to the rivage of the sea, and saw there mariners in great peril and like to perish in the sea. And he made his prayer, and anon the tempest ceased, and anon the mariners came to land and thanked God. And he understood by them that they went to Rome, and he desired to go with them, whom they received into their ship gladly, and said they would bring him thither without any freight or hire.

And then he came to Arles, and abode there two years with St. Cezarien, bishop of that city, and there he healed a man that had been sick of the fevers three years.

He Heals the Desert

And after, he desired to go into desert, and departed covertly, and dwelled there long with a hermit that was a holy man. And there by his merits he chased away the sterility and barrenness that was in that country, and caused great plenty of goods.

St. Giles and the Hind

And when he had done this miracle he doubted the peril of the glory human, and left that place, and entered farther into desert and there found a pit, and a little well, and a fair hind, which without doubt was purveyed of God for to nourish him, and at certain hours ministered her milk to him.

And on a time servants of the king rode on hunting, and much people and many hounds with them. It happed that they espied this hind, and they thought that she was so fair that they followed her with hounds, and when she was sore constrained she fled for succour to the feet of St. Giles, whom she nourished. And then he was much abashed when he saw her so chauffed, and more than she was wont to be. And then he sprang up and espied the hunters. Then he prayed to our Lord Jesu Christ that like as he sent her to him, to be nourished by her, that he would save her. Then the hounds durst not approach her by the space of a stone cast, but they howled together, and returned to the hunters, and then the night came, and they returned home again and took nothing.

And when the king heard say of this thing he had suspicion what it might be, and went and warned the bishop, and both went thither with great multitude of hunters, and when the hounds were on the place whereas the hind was, they durst not go forth as they did before, but then they all environed the bush for to see what there was, but that bush was so thick that no man ne beast might enter therein for the brambles and thorns that were there. And then one of the knights drew up an arrow follily for to make it afeard and spring out, but he wounded and hurt the holy man, which ceased not to pray for the fair hind.

And after this the hunters made way with their swords and went into the pit, and saw there this ancient man, which was clothed in the habit of a monk, of a right honourable figure and parure, and the hind lying by him.

And the king and the bishop went alone to him, and demanded him from whence he was, and what he was, and why he had taken so great a thickness of desert, and of whom he was so hurt. And he answered right honestly to every demand; and when they had heard him speak they thought that he was a holy man, and required him humbly pardon. And they sent to him masters and surgeons to heal his wound, and offered him many gifts, but he would never lay medicine to his wound, ne receive their gifts, but refused them. And he prayed our Lord that he might never be whole thereof in his life, for he knew well that virtue should profit to him in infirmity.

And the king visited him oft, and received of him the pasture of health. And the king offered to him many great riches, but he refused all.

And after, he admonished the king that he should do make a monastery, whereas the discipline of the order of monks should be, and when he had do make it, Giles refused many times to take the charge and the crosier. And at the last he was vanquished by prayers of the king and took it.

A Sin of King Charles is Forgiven

And then king Charles heard speak of the renown of him, and impetred [requested] that he might see him, and he received him much honourably, and he prayed him to pray for him; among other things because he had done a sin so foul and villainous that he durst not be shriven thereof to him ne to none other.

And on the Sunday after, as St. Giles said mass and prayed for the king, the angel of our Lord appeared to him, and laid a schedule upon the altar where the sin of the king was written in by order, and that was pardoned him by the prayers of St. Giles, so that he were thereof repentant and abstained him from doing it any more, and it was adjoined to the end that, who that required St. Giles for any sin that he had done, if he left it that it should be pardoned to him.

And after the holy man delivered the schedule to the king, and he confessed his sin and required pardon humbly.

St. Giles Raises a Dead Prince

Then St. Giles returned thence with honour, and when he came to the city of Nemausense, he raised the son of a prince that was dead.

His Monastery To Be Destroyed

And a little while after he denounced that his monastery should be destroyed of enemies of the faith.

The Miracle of the Cypress Gates

And after he went to Rome and gat privileges of the pope to his church, and two doors of cypress, in which were the images of SS. Peter and Paul, and he threw them into the Tiber at Rome, and recommended them to God for to govern. And when he returned to his monastery he made a lame man to go, and found the two doors of cypress at the gate of his monastery, whereof he thanked God that had kept them without breaking in so many adventures as they had been, and sith he set them at the gates of the church for the beauty of them, and for the grace that the church of Rome had done thereto.

His Death

And at the last our Lord showed to him his departing out of this world, and he said it to his brethren, and admonished them to pray for him, and so he slept and died goodly in our Lord.

And many witness that they heard the company of angels bearing the soul of him into heaven.
And he flourished about the year of our Lord seven hundred.

The [iconography of St. Giles](#) is available at the [Christian iconography website](#).

For other saints, see the [index to this Golden Legend website](#).

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halsall@fordham.edu

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