

SAINT OURS

AOSTE

According to the oldest tradition, Saint Ours, summoned by God, came to Aosta from faraway Ireland at a particularly delicate time for the Church in the Aosta Valley.

At the time, Ploceanus was the Bishop of the region; he was supported by King Theodoric, because he was a follower of the Arian heresy: he was unforgiving, cruel, stubborn in error and deaf to the exhortations and rebukes of Archdeacon Ours. Forewarned by God, Saint Ours prophesied the bishop's terrible end, at the hands of demons.

This was not the only prodigious page in the life of the saint, who remains the most credible and human character among the Aosta Valley ones who were granted such honours.

Saint Ours freed the plain of Cogne, which still bears his name, from the reptiles that infested it; he stopped a flood of the Buthier creek, driving the waters back into the stream's bed; he caused a fresh spring to gush out of the rock at Busseyaz; he found a master's horse and brought him to his inattentive valet, who thought he had lost it... and sat on his back.

Gifted with thaumaturgical virtues, Saint Ours healed the sufferings of those who resorted to him with the wine he obtained from his vineyard. The angels of the Lord would open the portal of the church widely as he approached it.

Sparrows circled around him and rested on his shoulders, for he never failed to think of them when he divided the harvest of his field: one part was for the poor, the other for himself, the third for the little friends of the air.

Saint Ours also distributed wooden clogs to the needy: the traditional fair that takes place annually in Aosta on the last days of January and bears his name is usually linked to this custom. There, artisans display their sculptures, tools, and the sabots they have carved and chiselled during the year.

Taken from: T. GATTO CHANU, *Fiabe e leggende della Valle d'Aosta*, Rome, Newton & Compton Editions, 2004