

Saint Drithelm • Saint stories

Imagine you're visiting a very sick relative. Suddenly you stop seeing his chest move up and down. He's died. Throughout the night everyone is crying and talking about his life.

Suddenly, this dead man sits up in bed and begins speaking! I know I would run screaming from the room. How about you?

That actually happened to a man named Drithelm who lived more than 1300 years ago. He was married, had children, and loved God. One day he became very sick and died—or so everyone thought!

Family and friends crowded around his body sobbing. As the sun began to rise, the “dead man” suddenly sat up and spoke! Everyone was shocked and ran screaming from the room—except his wife, who was too filled with joy to move an inch. Her husband was alive!

According to Drithelm, he **HAD** died and seen souls in purgatory. God decided to allow Drithelm a second chance to live a better life. Immediately after explaining this to his wife, he went to church and spent the day in prayer. “I can't waste this second chance at life without going to church and giving my thanks to God,” he said.

Drithelm knew he needed to make a change to avoid suffering for eternity. But what? After making sure his wife and children had all they needed, he left to visit his Christian king for advice. Upon hearing Drithelm's story, the king introduced him to the abbot of a nearby monastery. (This abbot later became Saint Ethelwald.) Drithelm joined the abbot's monastery and spent the rest of his life doing penances. At times he prayed in the icy water near the monastery—the water being so cold it had chunks of ice floating in it! To make up

for his sins and those of others, he deprived himself of all life's comforts.

"How can you suffer such hardships?" people asked. His reply: "Look around you. Others suffer even greater."


The actions of Drithelm encouraged others to make sacrifices, too. I'm sure many found their way to heaven because of these sacrifices.

Feast day: August 17

St. Drithelm, pray for us!

Activity: How Tough are You?

Need:

- A big bowl full of ice 
- About 1 cup water
- A stopwatch

Ask an adult for a big bowl full of ice. Add about one cup of water to the bowl and let it sit for five minutes.

Take turns to see who can keep his/her hand in the water the longest.

Would it be easy to pray in ice cold water? What sacrifices could you make?

Sacrifices don't have to be huge and grand. For example, if you like a lot of ice in your soda, make a sacrifice and only put in one ice cube, or none at all.