

Faith in Five – Adults Saints



1. Many people believe a saint to be a very good or holy person. The Church reserves this term for individuals who were martyred for the faith and the deceased who were remembered for being exceptional in faith and holiness. Saints are not honored for being perfect persons but honored for how their life demonstrated an extraordinary example of holiness or virtue. We are called to be saints, to live a life of virtue, humble service and authentic in our belief and devotion to God and His will.

2. Potential saints are carefully reviewed by the Church. Five years must pass from the time of the candidate's death, to allow for greater objectivity and evaluation. The pope can dispense this waiting period.

There are three steps to sainthood: Venerable, Blessed, then Saint (highlighted in pink below). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops offers greater detail on the process and shares these key words to understand ([Source](#)):

Servant of God - the title given to a candidate for sainthood whose cause is still under investigation, prior to being declared Venerable.

Venerable – the title given to a candidate for sainthood whose cause has not yet reached the beatification stage but whose heroic virtue has been declared by the pope.

Beatification – the second stage in the process of proclaiming a person a saint; this occurs after a diocese or eparchy and the Congregation for the Causes of Saints has conducted a rigorous investigation of the person's life and writings. There must be evidence that the candidate demonstrated a heroic level of virtue, offered their life or suffered martyrdom. A miracle attributed to the person's intercession must be proved.

Blessed – title bestowed on a person who has been beatified and accorded limited liturgical veneration. One miracle acquired through the candidate's intercession is required in addition to the recognition of heroic virtue or offering of life.

Canonization – the formal process by which the Church declares a person to be a saint and worthy of universal veneration. Canonization requires a second miracle after beatification. The pope may waive these requirements. A miracle is not required prior to a martyr's beatification, but one is required before canonization.

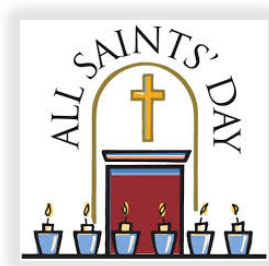
Saint – the title given to someone who has been formally canonized by the Church as sharing eternal life with God, and therefore offered for public veneration and imitation.

3. In 1983, Pope St. John Paul overhauled the sainthood process to make it “quicker, cheaper and less adversarial, in part because he wanted to lift up contemporary models of holiness” ([Source](#)). Examples of modern day “fast-tracked” saints include Pope St. John Paul II, St. Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) and St. Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio). St. Anthony of Padua and St. Francis of Assisi in their day, were also canonized swiftly.

4. In 2017 Pope Francis added a new pathway to sainthood, worthy of consideration: the free offering, dedication or sacrifice of one's life in service to the faith. "The offer of life is a new cause for the beatification and canonization procedure, distinct from the causes based on martyrdom and on the heroism of virtues" ([Source](#)).

"The new category has five main criteria:

- The individual must freely and voluntarily offer their life in the face of "a certain and soon-to-come death"
- There must be a "close relation" between "the offering of one's life and the premature death of the one who offers it."
- The person must show Christian virtues, at least to an ordinary extent, before and after offering their life.
- They must have a "reputation for holiness" at least after their death.
- They must have performed a miracle. This is a major difference from the "martyrdom" category, which does not require a miracle" ([Source](#)).



5. All Saints Day – November 1st

All Saints Day is preceded by Halloween (October 31) and followed by All Souls' Day (November 2nd). It is a day for remembering all saints, canonized and unknown, and all holy men and women united with God in Heaven. It is a reminder that everyone is called to holiness and that it is attainable! Pope Francis says it is a vocation for everyone!

Catholics attend Mass on this **Holy Day of Obligation**. (Image: Google)

6. **Why have a patron saint?** A patron saint can be considered as our personal heavenly intercessor, protector and advocate. Our connection with a patron saint may be due to virtues, values or characteristics we identify with or strive towards.

They are role models, providing holy examples of how to serve God, live life, and deal with suffering. We are able to appreciate the unique connection with our patron saint as they understand and pray for us in a special way. Along with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, our patron saint can help us live a life of grace.



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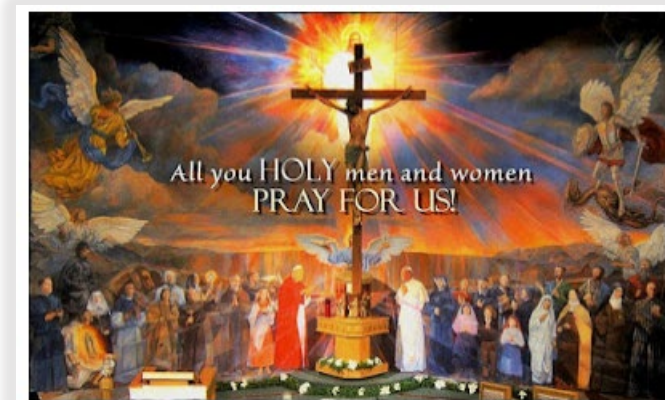
7. Devotions to Saints

Many devotions have developed over the years to honor the saints - special prayers, litanies, and novenas, as well as shrines and festivities celebrated on the saint's feast day. Catholics do not worship the saints but have a long tradition of honoring or venerating them.

Veneration consists of a certain respect and a desire to imitate their virtue; worship is reserved to the Divine Trinity. "The very practice of venerating the saints does great good for those who are devoted to the saints. By practicing love of the saints, we strengthen the unity of the entire Body of Christ in the Spirit" (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops).

Why pray to the saints in heaven? Throughout the New Testament, it can be seen that we are to pray for one another; Jesus required us to pray for others and not only for those who asked us to do so (Matthew 5:44). We pray directly to Jesus, but it does not mean we cannot ask others to pray for us, including the saints. Jesus says in Luke 20:38, "Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living; for all live to Him". Because the saints are alive, we believe that we can go to them to present our needs to God and intercede for us. Revelation 5:8 reveals where John depicts the saints in heaven offering our prayers to God under the form of "golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints." God hears the prayers of the righteous (James 5:16). **For further prayer, the [Litany of Saints](#)**

8. **The communion of saints** is the spiritual solidarity through our common bond as members of one body in Christ. It binds together the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven (CCC, 954), bringing grace to all through Jesus' life, death and resurrection. This doctrine is expressed in the Apostle's Creed,



"I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting".

In this communion of saints, the living offer prayers for the faithful departed - the souls in purgatory and those in heaven, while the saints in heaven pray and watch over us on our earthly path to holiness and Heaven. (Image source: Google)

A Catholic Mom's Life You Tube: [Let's be saints!](#)
[All About the Saints!!! THEY ARE AWESOME!](#)

We invite you to review the Faith in Five postings for Children (ages 3-8) and Children (Ages 8+) during the month of October. The weekly postings there will focus on the lives of the saints, in preparation for November's All Saints Day!