

LESSON SIX



Becoming a Saint

You have chosen a sponsor for your baptism and/or confirmation, and you have scheduled a date for the event with the parish; you have gotten all the necessary paper work in, and we are nearly done. It won't be long now before you have become a Catholic in the fullness of that term. In the earliest days of the Church the apostles

and fathers of the Church would talk about those within the Church as being saints, and certainly it is true that as a Catholic you will be numbered among many saints. Still, your life will also be a sign to others, and all Catholics should endeavor to be holy (which is the meaning of the word “saint”). That having been said, it is also important to choose a saint’s name for your confirmation, and this requires you to know a little about the countless saints in the Catholic Church. Most people choose a saint that they are particularly close to them, or that represents some virtue they wish to achieve. The choosing of a saint’s name for confirmation is not an unimportant responsibility, and you need to know something about the saint you choose, and be able to articulate why you chose that saint as a patron saint. The saints are Catholic heroes and heroines, and they are friends in heaven. Most people ask their friends for their prayers, and some of our friends just happen to be in heaven already.

The most important saint in heaven is by far the Blessed Virgin Mary, who is every Catholic’s favorite, and most of us offer a Hail Mary prayer up at least once a day. The affection and devotion that the Catholic has for the Blessed Virgin can be a good sign as to the real health and vigor of their own faith, and while it is true any good thing can be taken too far, a healthy respect and love for the Virgin Mary is something every Catholic should endeavor to achieve in his or her own life. This may come in stages over your life, but whatever you do don’t imagine that it is not important. The goal is to balance our devotion to Our Lady and the other saints within a proper hierarchy of values. Still, Mary is the queen of the saints, and

there can be no denying her importance in our human history and in our Church.

Homework Follows

One does not become a saint alone. He or she relies on many others for continued instruction and guidance. This is particularly true of the Christian witness you choose as a Sponsor. But it is also true of a "patron saint": a deceased person who has been recognized by the Church as a "canonized" saint, namely, a person whose intercession has been credited with miraculous medical cures or other "heroic" Christian works during his or her life. Discuss this selection process with the Coordinator, with your Sponsor, with the Pastor, and perhaps others. There are a number of books about saints, individually and collectively, in the parish library. Another helpful resource when starting out is Peter Klein, *The Catholic Source Book* (Harcourt Religion Publishers 4th Ed. 2007)(Chapter 8 is devoted to Saints, including the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Apostles, Fathers of the Church, and saints by occupation, trade, or profession, as well as country). This text, at page 370 explains, using the Latin distinctions the difference between worship (*latria*), owed exclusively to God as the Blessed Trinity; special veneration given to Mary, the sinless, ever-virgin Mother of God (*hyper-dulia*); and veneration or devotion to all other saints (*dulia*).

By this time in the process, a Catechumen or Candidate should know the Mass well enough to participate in the Entrance antiphon; *Confiteor* (or I Confess), *Kyrie*, *Gloria*, *Responsorial Psalm* antiphon; *Credo* (or Sunday Nicene Creed); Offertory antiphon; *Sanctus* (or Holy, Holy, Holy); *Communion* antiphon and Communion hymns; and the Recessional hymns.

1. Complete and discuss with the Coordinator the *Seventh Questionnaire*.
2. Consider a retreat at any number of area locations in the next few weeks. Make sure to first talk with the Coordinator and/or the Pastor about what your options are. Retreats are generally designed to benefit specific groups of people.

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Seventh Questionnaire

Please answer the following questions, and return this information to us.

1. Are you still attending weekly Sunday Mass at the parish?
2. Is your date scheduled at the parish for your baptism and/or confirmation, have you chosen your sponsor, and has that sponsor gotten their paperwork into the parish?
3. Have you chosen a patron saint for your confirmation, whose name you will take, and if so, who is that saint?
4. Why have you chosen this patron saint?
5. Can you tell me some things about this patron saint's life? Please write a few paragraphs on his or her life on the back of this page.
6. Are you really ready to be baptized and/or confirmed?