

# What a Saint Is

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God wanted from all eternity to make us one with Himself. That is why He created us. He wanted not merely to be our Creator, but our Father, giving us the title and the right to say to Him, “Our Father, who art in Heaven.”

Jesus, the Eternal Son of God, who became man, prays for us — after we receive sanctifying grace which divinizes our souls, and after we receive the Holy Eucharist which makes us concorporeal with Jesus—that we “may be one, as Thou Father in Me and I in Thee.” (John 17:21) Holy Communion makes us concorporeal with God-made-man. After receiving It we are one body, one life, one breath, one heartbeat with Jesus.

No one who reads the Bible, God’s book, can fail to see that the whole purpose of creation by God was the divinization of those whom He had created. Our time is to be eternity. Our life is to be everlasting. Our happiness is to be that which God has in being God. In all the prayers of the Catholic Church, one of the most constant utterances is *per omnia saecula saeculorum*, which means *forever and ever*.

A saint is a created being who has corresponded completely with God’s intention of divinizing him and making him holy. The word *saint* comes from the word *sanctus* in Latin, which means *holy*. The term sanctifying grace means the divine favor by which God elevates a created being to His own state of holiness, and shares with him the everlasting glory of being God’s own by adoption.

The Communion of Saints is the greatest brotherhood or sisterhood that there ever could be in creation. It is the union of all those who have been sanctified by God. The word *saint*, used in its highest sense, means someone already in the Beatific Vision whose heroism and holiness, achieved on this earth, have been acknowledged and approved by the Roman Catholic Church. But in a simple and initial sense, anyone can be called a saint who is in the state of sanctifying grace. Saint Paul in his epistles refers to all early Christians living on earth as “the saints.” He does this over thirty times.

Our Lord’s beautiful way of letting everyone know that the early Christians were truly saints was when He said to Saint Paul, who was then called Saul, *not* “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou My followers?” but “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?”

The greatest of all expressions of Christian belief is the *Apostles’ Creed*. In the *Apostles’ Creed* there are twelve articles, each one of which was written by

one of the Twelve Apostles. The ninth article of the *Apostles' Creed* is the expression of belief that those who are in the state of sanctifying grace are saints, "the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." Those who die in the state of sanctifying grace, even when they go to Purgatory, are saints. Those who have been purged in Purgatory of all their offenses, and have gone to Heaven, are saints forever. Those who have been outstandingly holy in achieving this goal while on earth are saints in the highest sense.

There are, therefore, three states of sanctity applied to the saints by the Catholic Church. They are: the Church Militant (those who are or can be put in the state of sanctifying grace and are fighting to keep it

as living members of the one, true Church); the Church Suffering (those who have died in the state of sanctifying grace and are being purged of their defects in Purgatory); and the Church Triumphant (those who have gone forever to see God and know God as God knows Himself, and are united to God in His eternity, in His infinity, in His glory and in His happiness, forever and ever.)

The word *Communion* when used in the term Holy Communion means that in our flesh and blood we are made participators of the Body and Blood of Jesus. So intense is this unity in what is called Holy Communion that, after having received it, any Catholic is entitled to say along with Saint Paul, "And I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20)



*Artistic rendering of the twin doctrines of the Mystical Body and the Communion of Saints. Jesus sacramentally nourishes His lambs through the Church.* 45

God wanted from all eternity to make us one with Himself. That is why He created us. He wanted to be not merely our Creator, but our Father. He wanted to give us the title and right to say with the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, God the Son, when we speak to God the Father, "Our Father, who are in Heaven." God the Creator becomes God our Father.

Every little Christian child who has been baptized and who has died before reaching the age of reason — before the age where he can commit any willful mortal sin, or fail to confess the one, true Faith to which by Baptism he belongs — goes immediately to the Beatific Vision. He, or she, is a little saint by sheer grace. There are millions of such baptized infants in Heaven, and they can be prayed to, and they pray for us.

Anyone who wants to be a saint can become one. Our Lord's challenge in this invitation is most beautiful and clear and definite. "Ask, and it shall be given you: seek, and you shall find: knock, and it shall be opened to you." (Matt. 7:7)

Those who are meek, who are mourning for holiness, who are hungry and thirsty for what God wants to give them, who are admittedly poor in spirit — shall possess the land, and shall be comforted, and shall have their fill, and theirs shall be the kingdom of Heaven. Those who want to be saints shall receive God's mercy. They shall see God, shall be called

the children of God and shall possess the kingdom of Heaven, if their own sanctification is their first goal and if they want to be saints. They are the salt of the earth. They are the light of the world.

Everyone in the world is called to be a saint. Those who are not Catholics are called to become Catholics. "Go ye into the whole world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mark 16:15, 16) Everyone who is in the Catholic Church is called to be a good Catholic, or to come back to the state of sanctifying grace through the Sacrament of Penance if he has lost it by sin. Every Catholic in the state of sanctifying grace is called to be holier and holier, so holy that the Church can declare him, or her, a saint.

Anyone who wants to be a saint can become one. Our Lord's challenge in this invitation is most beautiful and clear and definite. Ours shall be the kingdom of Heaven. We shall possess the land. We shall be comforted. We shall have our fill. All we need to be is meek, and longing with tears for what is to come, and hungry and thirsty for what God has to give us. We are called to be the salt of the earth. God wants us, and will make us the light of the world. That is, if our aim is to be a saint.