

What You Can Do To Become A Saint

by Annie @ Catholic wife, Catholic Life blog



Holiness is on my mind every single day.

But since All Saints Day and All Souls day are coming up, I figured that maybe it's also on your mind right now too. On a lot of minds, actually. And hopefully by reflecting on All Saints Day, we'll all remember to think about holiness just a little more often than we do, and hope for that ourselves.

In a homily he prepared for All Saints Day, Bishop Robert Barron said that the single biggest problem with this upcoming feast day is that, "it can make sanctity seem like something that's the special preserve of a handful of spiritual heroes, and not the ordinary goal of Christian life."

But it is.

He says that:

"The ordinary goal of the Christian life is to be a saint."

And by that, he means that it is not just a calling for a few, but for everyone!

It's the most important goal in my life and in my vocation. I want my husband and me, and our families and friends, to get to Heaven!

So I'm constantly working on it — *intentionally* working on it. But it's a very daunting task.

Like St. Zelig Martin said, "I have a lot of wood to chop, and it's as hard as stone."

Sometimes it sure does feel that way! BUT, like she also said:

"I should have started sooner, while it was not so difficult, but in any case, *better late than never.*"

That right there is key: better late than never!

That's what I keep reminding myself after every fall or failed attempt at holiness 😊

I can easily get overwhelmed with my sins and faults and think there's no hope for me to be a saint.

But that line of thinking is the stuff of human beings with our sinful nature, and not the stuff of Jesus Christ who was free of sin.

And if we're to become saints, we have to think and act like Him — like Jesus Christ.

And it's actually *because* of Him that we *can* be saints.

So if you're struggling with the idea of being a saint, and if you're thinking you can't possibly be one because of all of your sins, then here's my biggest tip for you:

Stop thinking of yourself and start thinking of Him.

And start thinking *like* Him.

And start thinking of all the saints who have gone before you, and ask for their intercession!

Remember, **"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, every sin which clings to us so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us."**

Sanctity *is* achievable — only because and through Jesus Christ! So be a lot less concerned with yourself and a lot more concerned with Him, and allow Him (ask Him!) to overcome those sins within you, and I have no doubt you can become a saint too.

Because, you see, **it's not about our merits. It's about learning to rely totally on God.** And letting Him work in your life — in your heart and in your mind.

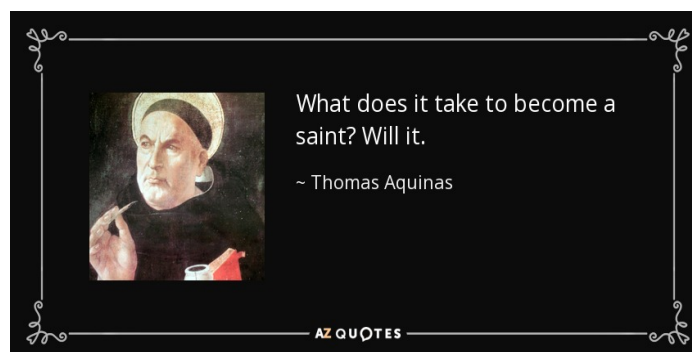
“When the Lord blesses those who hunger, the poor, the sorrowing, we should understand that He is talking not so much about an empty stomach, empty pockets, or just any kind of sadness that we might experience for whatever reason. Rather, the sometimes difficult and negative experiences that the beatitudes involve have to do mainly one positive thing for us: ***create within us an environment where Christ can live.*** To cultivate a spirit in which He can live in us, act through us, love through us is to share, here on earth, the life of the saints in heaven.” (Father John Henry Hanson)

We are just so closely bound to God’s love that nothing can sever us from it. Remember that, take it to heart (and by this, I mean unite yourself to His Sacred Heart, go to confession, do penance and try to sin no more!), and simply *keep striving* to be a saint! Over and over and over again.

And do not forget about God’s overflowing, overpowering abundance of mercy, and His wide open arms that are always ready to welcome you back into a state of grace.

So, What Can You Do To Become A Saint Today?

- + Have greater trust in God.
- + Believe that you are called to be a Saint. God wants you in Heaven with Him! He makes it possible!
- + Examine your conscience regularly.
- + Go to confession, do penance, try to sin no more.
- + Ask for our Blessed Mother’s prayers, and for the intercession of the communion of saints! They want you in Heaven with them too! And the Blessed Virgin Mary always brings us closer to Jesus.
- + Meditate on the life of Jesus Christ.
- + Accept the suffering in your life, allow it to bring you closer to Jesus on the cross. Offer it up.
- + Just keep trying.



The Saints Teach Us How to Trust God

Fr. Joseph M. Esper¹



Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.
-Hebrews 10:23

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks very movingly about the need to rely on our Father’s loving care: “Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? . . . Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.” (Matt. 6:25-27, 31-33)

We are completely dependent on God’s mercy and grace. We must trust that God wants to save us and that He will give us the resources we need to cope with life’s challenges and to achieve our eternal destiny. The saints had a profound awareness of the Lord’s presence in their lives — so profound that they didn’t seek miraculous confirmation or run after wonders and signs. Once, during the reign of St. Louis IX of France, when Mass was being said in the palace chapel, a miracle occurred during the Consecration: Jesus appeared visibly at the altar, in the form of a beautiful child. Everyone there gazed on Him in wonderful awe and contemplation, recognizing this miracle as a proof of the Real Presence. Someone hurried to tell the king, who was absent, so that he might come and witness the event. But Louis declined, explaining, “I firmly believe already that Christ is truly present in the Holy Eucharist. He has said it, and that is sufficient; I do not wish to lose the merit of my faith by going to see this miracle.”

¹ *Editor’s note: This article is adapted from a chapter in Fr. Esper’s Saintly Solutions to Life’s Common Problems, which is available from Sophia Institute Press.*

God meets our spiritual needs, just as He promised. He also provides for our physical needs, as long as we place our trust in Him. St. John of the Cross, on being informed by the cook in his monastery that there was no food for the following day, answered, “Leave to God the care of providing food. Tomorrow is far enough off; He is well able to take care of us.” The next morning there was still no food — until a wealthy benefactor came to the door. He explained that he had dreamed the previous night that the monks might be in need and had brought enough food and supplies to sustain them, just in case that was so.

Other saints had similar experiences. In the early nineteenth century, Bl. Anne-Marie Jahouvey established a religious congregation, over the strong objections of her father. She and the other sisters were running an orphanage, and when they ran out of money for food one day, Anne-Marie went into church to pray: “I need help. I know that I have been imprudent, and perhaps I have gone beyond Your will in many ways. But I have done it for the children. They are more Yours than they are mine. If I have made mistakes, punish me — not them. I beg You, don’t forsake them. Please, please help.” Anne-Marie then heard the voice of the Lord clearly: “Why have you come here to expose your doubts? Have you no faith in me? Have I ever disappointed you? Go back to the children.” There with a wagonload of food was her father, who said, “I don’t know why I am doing this, but I suppose I can’t let you starve.” Anne-Marie realized that God had not only tested her faith, but had also confirmed His loving care for her — for indeed, moving her unwilling father to bring assistance for all the orphans and sisters was perhaps a greater miracle than if He had stocked the pantry shelves with food suddenly created out of nothing.

St. John Bosco amazed many people by managing to care for a large number of orphans and other boys apparently without sufficient resources. Each time his assistants told him that dire financial problems could no longer be put off, he assured them, “God will provide” — and in every instance, he was right.

Another famous Italian, St. Frances Cabrini, showed this same childlike trust during her long ministry in the United States. She and the sisters of her religious order encountered many difficulties in their labors on behalf of poor Italian immigrants, but they managed to create and staff many schools, hospitals, and orphanages. Whenever a problem arose, Mother Cabrini would ask, “Who is doing this? We — or the Lord?”

Trusting God means believing in His care for us even when evil seems to be gaining the upper hand — a point understood by the sixth-century abbot St. Stephen of Rieti. When a wicked man burned down the barns holding all the monastery’s corn, the monks exclaimed to Stephen, “Alas for what has come upon you!” The abbot answered, “No, say rather, ‘Alas for what has come upon him that did this deed,’ for no harm has befallen me.” As Stephen knew, God’s providential care is far greater than any human treachery.

According to St. Albert the Great, “The greater and more persistent your confidence in God, the more abundantly you will receive all that you ask.” This point is echoed by St. Teresa of Avila, who reassures us, “God is full of compassion and never fails those who are afflicted and despised, if they trust in Him alone.”

If, indeed, we are trying to do God’s work, instead of our own, we need not fear the results. The Lord is an expert at solving problems and providing for us in our need (even to the point of working miracles, if need be). The one thing He can’t do, however, is force us to trust in Him. If we freely choose to do this, we’re cooperating with His grace, and the results are guaranteed to be wonderful and amazing.

For Further Reflection

“Do not fear what may happen tomorrow. The same loving Father who cares for you today will care for you tomorrow and every day. Either He will shield you from suffering, or He will give you unfailing strength to bear it. Be at peace, then, and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginings.” — *St. Francis de Sales*

“A few acts of confidence and love are worth more than a thousand ‘Who knows? Who knows?’ Heaven is filled with converted sinners of all kinds, and there is room for more.” — *St. Joseph Cafasso*

“Those whose hearts are enlarged by confidence in God run swiftly on the path of perfection. They not only run, they fly; because, having placed all their hope in the Lord, they are no longer weak as they once were. They become strong with the strength of God, which is given to all who put their trust in Him.” — *St. Alphonsus Liguori*

Something You Might Try

- St. Rose of Lima was afraid of the dark — a trait she inherited from her mother. Her mother and father once went looking for her after dark. This had an effect on Rose, who thought, “How is this? My mother, who is as timid as I, feels safe in the company of her husband. And am I afraid, accompanied by my Spouse, who without ever leaving me, is continually at my side and in my heart?” From then on, St. Rose no longer feared anything. You can benefit from her experience by continually reminding yourself that Jesus is with you, which means that you have nothing to fear.
- Trust in God even when things seem bleakest. A very upset mother superior once came to St. Joseph Cottolengo, who asked, “What’s the trouble, Sister?” She answered, “I have so many things to buy, Father, and this is all the money I have.” St. Joseph agreed that it was a very small sum, so he took the money, tossed it out the window, and consoled the shocked nun: “That’s all right; it has been planted now. Wait a few hours, and it will bear fruit.” Later that day, a woman came to see the saint and donated a large sum of money — more than enough to meet the community’s needs. Sometimes you have no apparent options, but — like St. Joseph Cottolengo — you can always choose to trust in God, and this allows Him to help you, often in ways you can’t foresee.

Further Reading

Psalm 25:1-3; Psalm 37:3; Luke 16:10; 1 Corinthians 13:7.

*O Christ Jesus, when all is darkness
and we feel our weakness and helplessness,
give us the sense of Your presence,
Your love, and Your strength.*

*Help us to have perfect trust in Your
protecting love and strengthening power,
so that nothing may frighten or worry us, for,
living close to You, we shall see Your hand,
Your purpose, Your will through all things.*

A Prayer Meditation for All Saints Day

by Safiyah Fosua

We give you thanks, O God, for all the saints who ever worshiped you
Whether in brush arbors or cathedrals,
Weathered wooden churches or crumbling cement meeting houses
Where your name was lifted and adored.

We give you thanks, O God, for hands lifted in praise:
Manicured hands and hands stained with grease or soil,
Strong hands and those gnarled with age
Holy hands
Used as wave offerings across the land.

We thank you, God, for hardworking saints;
Whether hard-hatted or steel-booted,
Head ragged or aproned,
Blue-collared or three-piece-suited
They left their mark on the earth for you, for us, for our children to come.

Thank you, God, for the tremendous sacrifices made by those who have gone before us.
Bless the memories of your saints, God.
May we learn how to walk wisely from their examples of faith, dedication, worship, and love.

Amen.