

St. Raymond of Penafort RCIA THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

1. Who/what are Saints?

- People who led very holy lives or lives of heroic virtue and are now in heaven
- Saint comes from the Latin word “sanctus” which means holy (or even “set apart”; different from the norm)
- Some of the saints did “great things” for the church, others lived very simple and humble lives
- Since they are in heaven, they can intercede for us (pray for us to the Father) and they are deserving of our honor because they are victorious
- A holy person who lived before Christ might also be considered a saint (see Matthew 27:52; graves open and the dead are raised)
- In Philippians 1:1 Paul sees all the believers as holy ones (saints) while they are still living on earth
- Hagiography is the study of and writings about lives of the saints

2. Members of the Church – The “Communion (union with) of Saints”

- How are we “related” to the saints?
- There is the *Pilgrim church* (people living on earth striving to live holy lives by following in the footsteps of Jesus; we are part of the pilgrim church until our death)
- There is the *Suffering church* (those who have died by were not yet “perfected” so they need to experience a purification in purgatory before they can enter into the glory of heaven; purgatory does not last forever, people will be freed and enter heaven)
- There is the *Glorified church* –(the communion or community of saints in heaven who will remain there forever with the Blessed Trinity)
- Where do we fit in?
 - We are a pilgrim people opposing evil day by day by day
 - We can pray for the souls in purgatory (remember them at Mass, have Mass offered for the dead)
 - We can seek intercession from saints (they lived in similar situations as us, what did they do?)
 -

3. Canonization Process

- Is the Formal Declaration by the pope that a person is in heaven and that their life is worthy of imitation by the faithful of the world (think “Hall of Fame” in a way)
- In the first 1200 years of the Church, people were declared saints by the people (there was no real process)
- Pope Gregory IX restricted canonization to the pope in 1234
- It involved a “Sacred Congregation for Causes and Saints” (made up of Bishops, Theologians, Medical Doctors and a variety of lay faithful)

- The process can start 5 years after death and must demonstrate a life of heroic virtue or martyrdom and two miracles attributed to this person's intercession (strict process for what gets called a "miracle")

4. Stages in Canonization

- A person is declared a "Servant of God" when the local Bishop decides to begin the process after investigating the life and seeing a case for "extraordinary virtue"
- "Beatification" takes place after one miracle is found credible; the person is now called "Blessed" and allowed to be "venerated" in a local area (their religious community or the diocese or country where they lived)
- "Canonization" (meaning added to the canon, which means their names can be mentioned in the Eucharistic Prayer at Mass) takes place after a second miracle is found credible; they are now called "Saint" and "venerated" by the Universal Church as well as being given a "Feast Day" (which is usually when they died)

5. Types of Canonized Saints

- Mother of God – Mary
- Pope - Gregory the Great
- Bishop – Patrick
- Priest - Francis de Sales; Raymond
- Deacon - Stephen, Francis of Assisi
- Religious founder - Ignatius Loyola; Elizabeth Seton
- Lay person - Thomas More; Gianna Molla
- Martyr - Maximilian Kolbe
- Virgin – Bakhita, Mother Theresa
- Missionary - Francis Xavier
- Mystic - Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross

6. Patrons of Various Types

- Given the particulars of a saint's life, they may become "the Patron Saint" of something or some group given their own experiences. This happens by popular acclaim, the church rarely declares someone a "patron saint" in a formal way
- St Francis, Patron of Animals – he overcame fear and saw the beauty of God's creation in animals
- St Camillus, Patron of Nurses – he was a nurse
- St Raymond, Patron of Librarians – he established a library system in Spain which was used throughout the world
- For a complete listing, see: <http://saints.sqpn.com/>