

Inquiry Session: Saints

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA

Reflect on Your Experience

Parents, relatives, friends, coworkers—these are a few of the possible people we know and admire for their combination of amazing skills, personal qualities, and positive impact on those around them. They become role models for us, examples of virtue and upright living.

For Reflection . . .

Who is a role model you strive to emulate? Why?

Hear the Good News About the Saints

The word “saint” comes from the Latin *sanctus* or “holy.” Saints are holy persons who live in close connection with God. Their witness of faith is so strong and true that they become a shining example to others. Some saints are canonized—that is, officially recognized by the Church as saintly and worthy models of the Christian life.

Canonized saints, as well as Mary, the Mother of God, are not just role models, however. Because they are close to God, they intercede for us. We invoke them and their prayerful help as we would ask a living friend for prayers in time of need.

We turn to the saints for inspiration. They lived faithfully, often under terribly difficult and challenging circumstances. We look to them for guidance and wisdom. In Mary we see a very special model of holiness, or sanctity. She put her entire life at the disposal of the saving plan made visible in Jesus.

Read the Word of God

1 Corinthians 6:1-2

(The Church is described as being made up of holy ones.)

Romans 1:7

(Christian call to holiness)

Matthew 13:43

(The righteous will shine like the sun.)

Respond Through Action

Ask a number of people who their favorite saint is and why. Invite them to tell you the main outline of that saint’s life. You may want to read a few saints’ biographies from collections in books or on the internet. As you become more familiar with the saints, be aware of their outstanding features. Ask yourself what is similar in their lives when you compare their stories, and what is unique.

For Reflection . . .

If you were an official member of the canonization process, what would be on your list as you evaluated a candidate for sainthood?

Witness to the Gospel

SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES

1567–1622

Francis de Sales was born in France. He received a doctorate in law, but instead of pursuing a secular career he aspired to the priesthood—against his family’s wishes. In 1593 he was ordained. Sent to minister in Switzerland, he brought 8,000 Calvinists back to the Catholic Church. He became bishop of Geneva in 1602. He was famous for his learning, wisdom, pastoral guidance, and administrative abilities. In his classic *Introduction to the Devout Life*, he shows how ordinary people can strive to live “saintly” lives. Called “the Gentle Christ of Geneva,” Francis de Sales died on December 28 in Lyons, France. Saint Francis de Sales’ feast day is celebrated on January 24.