

# Catechumenate Session

APPRENTICES IN FAITH: A Resource for the OCIA  
Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C • August 17, 2025



*Jesus our Savior,  
your example  
inspires us to run  
the earthly race  
with faith, hope,  
and determination.  
Guide our steps.  
Keep us from losing heart.  
Help us to always  
keep our eyes  
fixed on you.*

## Sunday Word

Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

Psalms 40:2-4, 18 (14b)

Hebrews 12:1-4

Luke 12:49-53

### *Speaking the Truth*

Jeremiah spoke God's word to the people, but they were not words the people wanted to hear (see Jeremiah 38:2-3). He was thrown into the cistern and left to die. Yet his punishers relented and rescued him from the threats of famine and death.

### *Following the Savior*

Saint Paul encourages us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, our Savior, our leader, and the perfecter of faith. In him alone can we find the strength to turn from sin, endure hardship, and persevere in the path of discipleship.

### *Establishing Division*

Families can and do find themselves divided over issues such as finances, care of an aging parent, or how to best raise children. Jesus says that making a choice to be his disciple may also be a source of division within one's family.

## Church Teaching: The Cloud of Witnesses and the Communion of Saints

### *The Cloud of Witnesses*

The cloud of witnesses referred to in today's Second Reading is all those in Heaven, most especially those recognized by the Church as saints. Their examples, writings, and prayers of intercession uphold and strengthen us, who are pilgrims on earth today (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2683). The celebration of the solemnities, feasts, and memorials of Mary and the saints keeps their example ever before the Church as she continues her earthly journey to the heavenly kingdom. The Scriptures, hymns, and prayers of these feasts remind us of the Salvation we have in Christ and of the pledge of eternal life with God in Heaven.

## The Communion of Saints

The Communion of Saints includes a communion in holy things as well as a communion among holy persons. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (949–953) explains that the communion in holy things includes communion in the faith (sharing the faith in common); communion of the sacraments (all of the sacraments unite the faithful with one another and to Jesus Christ); communion of charisms (given by the Holy Spirit for the building up of the Church); possessing all in common (as in Acts 4:32); and communion in charity (standing in solidarity with all in need).

The communion among holy persons includes pilgrims on earth, the dead who are being purified in Purgatory, and the blessed in Heaven. This communion of holy persons is one Body, one family in Christ.

Among the saints, the Blessed Virgin Mary is honored as the Church's model of holiness, faith, and charity. In the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Litany of Loreto), she is named as Queen of angels, Queen of patriarchs and prophets, Queen of apostles and martyrs, Queen of confessors and virgins, and Queen of all saints.

### Pilgrims on Earth

Busy schedules; pressures at home, school, and work; illness; and life's daily responsibilities can quickly draw our attention and time away from our relationship with God. Keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus requires a deliberate effort on our part. The Church provides the rich heritage of Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition to help us on our way. A commitment to prayer, reading and reflecting on the Gospels, honoring the Ten Commandments, living the Beatitudes, and performing the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy help us stay spiritually fit for the race of life and faith.

Just as Jesus our Savior and the cloud of witnesses—most especially the saints in Heaven—have given us the example of how to run life's race and face life's trials and difficulties without losing heart, so we are invited to encourage and inspire others by our words, deeds, and example.

Disciples of Jesus journey to the Kingdom of God as one Body in Christ, supporting, encouraging, and companionship each other through life's anxieties and sorrows, celebrations and joys. The saints in Heaven intercede for us, we remember them in the Church's prayer and liturgy, and we care for and hold the pilgrims on earth in prayer as we look with faith and hope to the joy of eternal life with God.

## Key Terms

### CLOUD OF WITNESSES

Those who have preceded us into the Kingdom of Heaven, most especially the saints recognized by the Church. Their greatest service to God is interceding for us and for the whole world (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 2683).

### COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Includes a communion in holy things and a communion among holy persons. The holy persons include those who have died and now enjoy eternal life in Heaven, those who have died and are being purified, and those who are pilgrims on earth (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 948 and 962).

## Voices of Faith

Calling the saints to mind inspires, or rather arouses in us, above all else, a longing to enjoy their company. . . . We long to share in the citizenship of heaven, to dwell with the spirits of the blessed, to join the assembly of patriarchs, the ranks of the prophets, the council of apostles, the great host of martyrs, the noble company of confessors, and the choir of virgins.

—Saint Bernard, abbot

The saints are those who obey the Lord, those who worship the Lord, those who have not lost the memory of the love with which the Lord has made the vineyard: the saints in the Church.

—Pope Francis

## Further Reading

***Catechism of the Catholic Church***: 2683–2684 (cloud of witnesses), 946–953 (The Communion of Saints), 954–959 (The Communion of the Church of Heaven and Earth)

***United States Catholic Catechism for Adults***: pages 160–161 (The Communion of Saints)

***Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church***: 194, 195 (The Communion of Saints)