

FOREWORD

My Dear Friend,

In the Apostles' Creed you say, "I believe in the communion of saints." The word "saints" means all those in the state of sanctifying grace. Therefore, you have millions of friends, bound to you by the spiritual bond of divine grace and charity flowing from Christ, our divine Head. These friends are especially the saints in heaven who are now enjoying their triumph with God forever.

Through the communion of saints, the blessed in heaven can help you on earth by praying for you. Above all, the Queen of Saints, Mary, Mother of God and Our Mother, is praying for you before the throne of her Son. As one of the faithful on earth, through the communion of saints, you should honor the saints in heaven and pray to them, because they are worthy of honor, and as friends of God will help you to serve God and save your soul.

I have prepared these life stories of the saints and these wonderful pictures in color to help you know the saints better. They are your brothers and sisters in heaven. They want to help you get to heaven. Try to be like the saints in doing all you can to know, love and serve God as they did, and in this way save your soul. Ask the saints to help you practice virtue and to overcome sin.

God wants you, too, to become a saint. You do not have to be canonized to become a saint. You can be a saint by doing God's will at all times. This means loving God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself for the love of God.

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ANTHONY was born in the year 251 in Egypt. He wanted to fulfill the words of our Lord: "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor." While still a young man, he gave away all his possessions and begged an old hermit to teach him how to live a holy life. He visited a number of hermits and tried to imitate their example. He retired into the desert, where he lived the life of a hermit for many years. He devoted himself to prayer and penance.

For more than twenty years Anthony was tempted by the devil, but he overcame temptation by prayer and sacrifice. Many people flocked to him for advice. He consented to guide them in holiness. In this way he founded the first monastery. Therefore, he is called the father of monastic life and the patriarch of monks.

His miracles drew so many people to him that he fled again into the desert, where he lived by hard work and prayer. St. Athanasius, who wrote his life story, said that just knowing about the way Anthony lived is a good guide to virtue.

In 305, Anthony founded a religious community of hermits who lived in separate cells. He died in 356 at the age of one hundred and five.

SAINT ANTHONY THE ABBOT

January 17

Lord God, You gave St. Anthony the Abbot the grace of serving in the desert in prayer with You. Aided by his intercession, may we practice self-denial and hence always love You above all things.

Patron of Gravediggers



SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER

December 3

O Lord, You won many peoples for Your Church through the preaching of St. Francis. Inspire the faithful today with the same zeal for spreading the Faith, so that everywhere the Church might rejoice in her many children.

Patron of Foreign
Missions



FRANCIS was born in 1506 in Spain of noble parents. He was sent to the College of St. Barbara in Paris and became a teacher. He joined St. Ignatius Loyola and four other young men who vowed to work for the conversion of souls. They formed the Society of Jesus.

Before his ordination to the priesthood in Venice, he cared for the sick in a hospital. The King of Portugal wanted six missionaries to preach the Faith in India. One of these was Francis. He journeyed to Goa. There he comforted the sick and walked through the streets ringing a bell, asking the children to come to catechism in the church. Later he preached in public, and soon the whole city was converted. In the south of India he converted thousands of pagans. The burning flame coming forth from his heart is a sign of his burning love for souls. The globe reminds us that he traveled great distances to save them. He is the patron of the foreign missions.

Francis sailed for Japan in 1549. Other missionaries joined him there. He converted many thousands of people. While on a ship going to China, he became very ill of a high fever. The ship stopped at an island, off the coast. He died in an old cabin on December 2, 1552.

SAINT NICHOLAS

December 6

*We call upon Your
mercy, O Lord.
Through the interces-
sion of St. Nicholas,
keep us safe amid all
dangers so that we
may go forward with-
out hindrance on the
road of salvation.*

Patron of Russia
and Bakers



NICHOLAS was born toward the end of the third century. He was ordained a priest, and appointed abbot of a monastery.

Nicholas was very generous to the poor. He showed himself the special protector of the innocent and the wronged. Once he heard that a man who had become very poor intended to abandon his three daughters to a life of sin. He went out by night, flung a bag of gold into the window of the sleeping father, and hurried away. Later the father fell at his feet and said, "Nicholas, you are my helper. You have delivered my soul and my daughters' from hell."

St. Nicholas is regarded as the special patron of children; the word Santa Claus comes from his name. He died at Myra in the year 342.

The Emperor Justinian built a church in his honor at Constantinople about the year 540. In 1807 his relics were brought to Ban, Italy. He has always been venerated in the Latin and Greek Churches, but the Russian Church seems to honor him more than any other saint. He is the patron saint of Russia.



BLESSED TERESA OF CALCUTTA

September 5

O God, You blessed Mother Teresa with a tireless drive to minister to the poorest of the poor. Grant us the grace to open our hearts to help those who are less fortunate than we are.

IN 1910, Teresa of Calcutta was born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu to devout Catholic Albanian parents in Skopje, today the capital of the Republic of Macedonia. Early on, she felt called to religious life and, at eighteen, entered the Loreto Sisters of Dublin. A year later, she traveled to Darjeeling, India, for her novitiate. In 1937, she took her final vows.

Then, in 1946, Mother Teresa heard a new call: help the poor while living in their midst. With permission, she left the Sisters of Loreto and went to Calcutta, where she began the Missionaries of Charity. Though a small community at first, the numbers grew to help meet the many needs of the destitute. At her death, the congregation numbered over four thousand with thousands of lay volunteers.

Her efforts were recognized worldwide—as were her boundless energy and commitment to the poor. In 1979, she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her extraordinary care of the suffering.

Years of tireless giving and dealing with health concerns ended with her death in 1997. She was beatified by Pope St. John Paul II in 2003.



SAINT JOHN PAUL II

October 22

God our Father, Pope St. John Paul II urged us to "open wide the doors to Christ." Through his intercession, may all of us learn to open the doors of our hearts to Christ's everlasting love and mercy.

POPE John Paul II was born Karol Jozef Wojtyla in Wadowice, Poland in 1920. The start of World War II interrupted his education, and he began working in a quarry and a chemical factory.

In 1942, he began studying in secret at the seminary in Krakow. After ordination, he went to Rome and received a doctorate in theology. Returning to Poland, he earned a second doctorate, began teaching philosophy, and was a caring, effective university chaplain.

He was named Auxiliary Bishop of Krakow in 1958 and attended all four sessions of Vatican II. Named Krakow's Archbishop in 1964, he was elevated to Cardinal in 1967. After Pope Paul VI's successor died after thirty-three days, he was elected in October 1978 and took the name John Paul II.

During his papacy, he added five new Mysteries to the Rosary, canonized over 400 Saints, began World Youth Day, effectively reached out to other faiths, and wrote fourteen encyclicals.

After his death in 2005, Pope Benedict XVI declared him Blessed in 2011, and he was canonized by Pope Francis in 2014.