

# Saints For Our Lives

## Develop A Relationship with the Saints

One important mark of a Christian life is praying for others. We pray for our family and friends and ask friends and family to pray for us all the time. Sometimes we forget that we have even more family in heaven, in the saints! This week we discuss why it is good to develop relationships with the saints, how to grow that relationship, and how to find more saints to help you with your life.

## Top Reasons to Develop a Relationship with the Saints:

### 1. They've been through it all already.

Paul's letter to Timothy (2 Timothy 4:7) says, the saints "have fought the good fight, ... have finished the race, [and] have kept the faith." The saints have been through the struggles of life. When we are having a hard time, they understand as they intercede for us.

### 2. They know God so intimately.

As members of the Church we are connected to the blessed in heaven. These saints have achieved holiness, making their prayers powerful and effective. In *Christ Our Pascha: Catechism of the Ukrainian Catholic Church*, it states that the saints "have obtained the gift of God's likeness, having made the journey from the 'image' to the 'likeness' of God" (318). Icons of the saints show them staring at us, so that we can "look through their eyes into the divine." The saints have a lot to teach us about being close to God.

### 3. The saints are interested in our salvation.

In Luke 15:10, Jesus says "Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents." Now that the saints have joined the angels in heaven, they too, rejoice as God's beloved children return to Him.

## How to Develop a Relationship with the Saints.

There is no saint closer to Jesus than Mary. When you're ready to start developing a relationship with the saints, start with Mary! Remember that Mary is our mother. Jesus gave her to us from the cross. After Mary, move onto St. Joseph as a spiritual father.

## What Saints Should You Get to Know.

There are innumerable saints. God helps us find the saints we need when we need them. First of all, trust that saints come across your path for a reason. If you hear a saint mentioned or come across a name, try to learn more about that saint. Books and the Internet are a good resources. Talk to people who might know about the saint and ask your pastor for information. You're likely to find something out about that saint that resonates with you. Do the same thing if there's a saint that makes you feel uncomfortable. Look into them. They might be challenging you. And they might become your favorite saint. If you struggle with a particular vice, look into saints that had the same problem. It helps you relate to them and makes it easier for you to learn to grow close to that saint. It will help you understand how to deal with the challenges that you and saint have in common.

Don't expect to feel connected to every saint. Get a book of the lives of the saints and read it daily. Not every saint is going to be a big part of challenging you and bringing you to holiness in this life. Don't feel bad if you're looking into a saint and not feeling inspired. Leave them aside for now. Perhaps they may become a big part of your life later. Or not. God knows which saints he wants you to connect with now.

## How to Get to Know the Saints:

- Read books about and by the saints. Stories about the saints help us to get to know them better, as do the writings by the saints. Any book written by a saint is going to be an engaging read!
- Get icons of the saints. Icons are a great Byzantine method of becoming close to your saint. Besides learning about all the symbolism in your saint's icon, looking at it can help remind you to ask for help/intercessory prayers. The tangible nature of icons helps us build a relationship and grounds us.
- If you can't find an icon try looking for a medal of the saint that you're working to develop a relationship with. Saints' medals are great because they are a little bit like an icon you can wear.
- Don't forget the saints in your own family. Many of us have deceased friends and family members who led lives of great prayer and faithfulness to God. They served as examples and teachers to us in their earthly lives and we remain connected to them after death. We are all part of the mystical body of Christ. Turn to these people – unknown to the rest of the world – and pray to them and seek their help and intercession. The holy people who loved us in this life continue to love us in the next. They enjoy eternal life with and in God and we remain connected to them.

