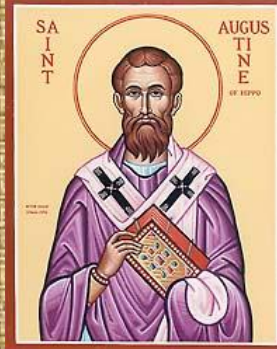


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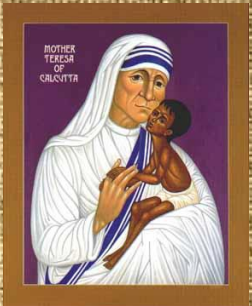
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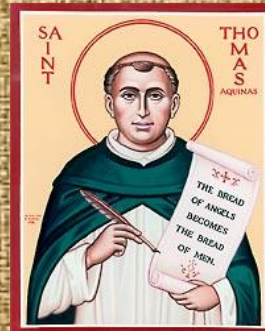
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THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Part VIa Saint--A Biblical Portrait



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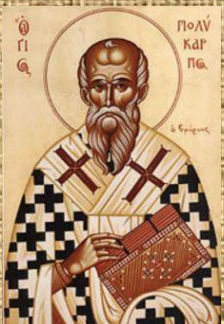
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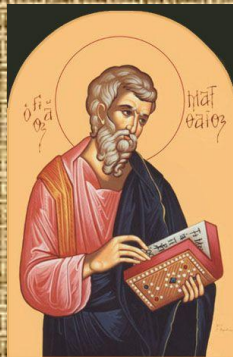
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A Biblical Portrait of Saint

The word in the Bible for “saint” or “saints” is the word (*hagios*) also translated “sanctified” or “holy ones.” The root word *hazo*, means “to venerate.” *Hagios* means to be separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God. *Hagios* is used of God (Luke 1:49; Acts 3:14; Matthew 1:18, etc.).

It is a word used of men and things (1 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 2:5, 9, etc.) When Paul uses the word “saint” **in the singular**, he refers to **a state into which God calls men and women with His grace.**

Philippians 4:21

Give my greetings to **every holy one** (*hagion*) in Christ Jesus.

In **its plural form**, Paul uses the word to refer to **all believers**. For Paul, the word is **not applied only to persons of exceptional holiness, nor to those having died characterized by an exceptional life of saintliness.**

Ephesians 2:19

So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with **the holy ones** (*hagios*) and members of the household of God,

Romans 12:13

Contribute to the needs of **the holy ones**, exercise hospitality.

Romans 16:15

Greet Philologus, ... and all **the holy ones** who are with them.

1 Corinthians 16:1

Now in regard to the collection for **the holy ones**, you also should do as I ordered the churches of Galatia.

1 Corinthians 16:15

I urge you, brothers--you know that the household of Stephanas is the firstfruits of Achaia and that they have devoted themselves to the service of **the holy ones**.

It is Paul who calls *all his fellow believers* “**saints,**” and not just the notably holy ones. Paul also uses the term for both those who are living and for those who are dead.

2 Thessalonians 1:9-10

These (who do not acknowledge God nor heed the good news) will pay the penalty of eternal ruin, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power, when he comes to be glorified among **his holy ones** (*hagiois*) and to be marveled at on that day among all who have believed, for our testimony to you was believed



This practice of Paul corresponds to one of the earliest creedal statements of Christian faith:

The Apostles Creed: “I believe in the communion of saints.”

Communion of saints refers to the bond of **unity among all believers, both *living and dead***, who are or have been committed followers of Jesus Christ.

In the eyes of God, in eternity, **the distinction between His People who are “living” or who are “dead” is *not* at all important.**

Mark 9:4

Then **Elijah appeared to them along with Moses**, and they were conversing with Jesus.

Mark 12:26-27

As for the dead being raised, have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the passage about the bush, how God told him, “I am the God of Abraham, (the) God of Isaac, and (the) God of Jacob?” **He is not God of the dead but of the living.** You are greatly misled.



THE TRANSFIGURATION

Jude 14-15

Enoch, of the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied also about them when he said, “Behold, the Lord has come with **his countless holy ones** (*hagiais*) to execute judgment on all and to convict everyone for all the godless deeds that they committed ...”

Luke 23:43

He replied to him (the crucified thief) “Amen, I say to you, today **you will be with me in Paradise.**”

Romans 12:5

... so we, though many, are **one body in Christ** and individually parts of one another.

On the Church, No. 49, Vatican II

“At the present time some of (Jesus’) disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory beholding ‘clearly God himself, three in one, as He is.’”



The Canon of Holiness

Leviticus 11:44

For I, the LORD, am your God; and you shall make and **keep yourselves holy, because I am holy**. ...
Since I, the LORD, brought you up from the land of Egypt that I might be your God, **you shall be holy, because I am holy**.

Leviticus 19:2

Speak to the whole Israelite community and tell them:
Be holy, for I, the LORD your God, am holy.

Hosea 11:9

For I am God and not man, **the Holy One** present among you;

1 Peter 1:15

... As he who called you is holy, **be holy yourselves** in every aspect of your conduct, for it is written, “Be holy because I (am) holy.”

Hebrews 12:14

Strive for peace with everyone, and for that **holiness without which no one will see the Lord.**

1 Thessalonians 4:3

This is the will of God, **your holiness** . . .

Matthew 5:48

So **be perfect**, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Our words holy and holiness come from the Hebrew (qadosh and qodesh) from the Greek (hagios, hagiosyne) and the Latin (sanctitas, sacer, sanctus). Essentially **holy means what is divine and pertains to God**. It is His most intimate essence in which He radically transcends all that is created; totally Other.

Holiness extends to **whatever is in relationship with the divine**; it includes the idea of **separation and opposition to what is profane and common**; it expresses the idea of **belonging to or being possessed by God**.

As Paul writes, in each individual, sanctification takes place through faith and baptism.

Romans 15:16

... to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in performing the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering up of the Gentiles may be acceptable, **sanctified by the holy Spirit.**



1 Corinthians 6:11

That is what some of you used to be; but now you have had yourselves washed, **you were sanctified**, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Paul continues . . . sanctification through faith and baptism makes one belong to God.

Romans 6:19, 22

I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your nature. For just as you presented the parts of your bodies as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness for lawlessness, so now present them as slaves to **righteousness for sanctification**. . . . But now that you have been freed from sin and have become slaves of God, **the benefit that you have leads to sanctification**, and its end is eternal life.

The Role of the Saints

The saints are presented to believers as *role models* whose lives are worthy *to be imitated*.

Hebrews 6:12

... so that you may not become sluggish, but **imitators** of those who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promises.

Hebrews 12:1

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great **a cloud of witnesses**, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us.

1 Corinthians 11:1

Be **imitators** of me, as I am of Christ.

Philippians 3:17

Join with others in being **imitators** of me, brothers, and observe those who thus conduct themselves according to the model you have in us.

Council of Vatican II, *On the Church*, No. 50

“For when we look at the lives of those who have faithfully followed Christ, we are inspired with a new reason for seeking the city which is to come (Hebrews 13:14; 11:10). At the same time we are shown a **most safe path** by which ... we will be able to arrive at perfect union with Christ, that is holiness.”



“In the lives of those who shared in our humanity and yet were transformed into especially successful images of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18), God vividly **manifests to men his presence and his face.**”

“He **speaks to us in them**, and **gives us a sign of his kingdom**, to which we are powerfully drawn, surrounded as we are by so many witnesses (Hebrews 12:1), and having such an argument for the truth of the gospel.”

The Intercession of the Saints

As part of their belief in the role of the saints as professed in the Apostles Creed, Catholic Christians petition the intercession of the saints.

The apostle Paul frequently asked other fellow believers in Jesus to pray for him.

Colossians 4:3

At the same time, **pray for us**, too, that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak of the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison.

Romans 15:30

... join me in the struggle by **your prayers to God** on my behalf.

James asks presbyter believers to pray over other believers.

James 5:14

Is anyone among you sick? He should summon the presbyters of the church, and they should **pray over him** and anoint (him) with oil in the name of the Lord.



Prayer appears to be the normal way for believers (saints) on earth to support one another. Probably all of us have asked another Christian, as Paul did--another saint in the Body of Christ--to pray for us when we had a need.

Catholic Christians believe that as we can ask **a fellow Christian--a saint--**to pray for us, we should be able to ask prayers from the saints already united to the Lord in heaven.



If the prayers of certain Christians here on earth seem to possess special power because of their great faith witness or holiness, how much more powerful and effective might not the **prayers of those of the communion of saints in heaven** who are fully united to God.

How Do Saints *Hear* Us?

It is frequently asked, and reasonably so, how can the Saints know and hear so many countless intercessory prayers from so many Christians worldwide petitioning them. The question is really **one of knowing, not hearing**.

It is important for us to remember the fullness of revelation regarding our state of being after our human life is completed.

Principle among scriptures revealing our future life is the revelation of the essential nature of God Himself. Jesus often spoke of His Father (Abba) and of His Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19

Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them **in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit.**

John 10:38

but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may realize (and understand) that **the Father is in me and I am in the Father.**

The New Testament speaks often of the unity of the Godhead.

John 14:10

Do you not believe that **I am in the Father** and **the Father is in me**? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works.

John 14:11

Believe me that **I am in the Father and the Father is in me**, or else, believe because of the works themselves.

John also speaks of our union with the Father and Jesus as a fellowship a word from the Greek *koinonia* which is translated “community” meaning “in-union-with.”

1 John 1:3

What we have seen and heard we proclaim now to you, so that you too may have **fellowship** with us; for our **fellowship** is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.



Jesus is most specific about our final relationship with Him. He calls it a one-ness.

John 17:11

And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that **they may be one** just as we are.

John 17:21

so that they may **all be one**, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me.

John 17:22

And I have given them the glory you gave me, so that **they may be one, as we are one.**

The Trinity is a foreshadowing of our eternal life--a oneness with the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. We will share the life of the Godhead; as He knows so shall we know.

The Saints already in union, at-one-ness with God share his life and his knowledge.

Paul put it succinctly.

1 Corinthians 13:12

At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; **then I shall know fully**, as I am fully known.

John also had an insight that reflected our destiny.

1 John 3:2

Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed **we shall be like him**, for we shall see him as he is.

End of
Saint--A Biblical Portrait, Part VIa

Go to
Canonization and Incorruptibles, Part VIb