

"Calling upon the Saints"...

For many of us, the saints have not been a part of our faith formation and thus our faith life and practices. Some of us may be named after a saint whom we know a little about. Others may remember the saint name that they took at Confirmation. Finally others may recall seeing prayer cards and statues of saints when visiting older relatives and Churches. With this being said, I often wonder how many of us actually have any type of relationship with the saints?

As we celebrate this "Year of Faith", it is our goal that we all grow as Catholics and what better way to do so than by exploring and allowing ourselves to be guided by the saints.

In the Catholic Church, we are blessed with the saints. Men and women from all times, places and circumstances who through their faith and devotion have been granted a special status in God's Kingdom. Many faced unbearable circumstances, torture and even death for their faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ. These holy women and men who have gone before us can be of great comfort to us in our times of need. Through their example, we can be inspired to better follow the Lord in our daily lives. They will even act as intercessors with God on our behalf when incorporated into our prayer life. Saints are so much more than prayer cards, dusty statues and tarnished medals. They are our brothers and sisters in faith. With this in mind it seems like there is no time like the present to spend some time getting to know these important members of our family!

Wondering where to start... How about with your name? Your birth date? A hobby or an occupation? We have saints for most names and dates who are patrons of occupations, hobbies and special needs (illness, pregnancy, old age). The internet is a wonderful resource for information on the saints but if you don't have access to a computer, go "old school" and look in books! Here at St John's we have books for every age group on the saints and as well as videos and a few DVD's. In my office I even have a cookbook highlighting dessert selections for celebrations on certain saint feast days! Don't forget parish calendars too, they list saint feast days. Hang one in your kitchen so each morning as you are pouring your coffee or waiting for your water to heat for tea take a minute to look at it to

see what saint is being honored that day and remember them in your prayers that day.

What else can you do? Share what you learned with friends and family. Celebrate the feast days with a special family prayer honoring that saint. Dust off those Statues, polish those medals and I'll say it again PRAY!

Worried about running out of saints - don't! The Church continues to recognize those special people and are adding to the list each year or so. In fact on October 21, seven new saints were canonized by Pope Benedict XVI including two new American saints, Mother Marianne Cope of Molokai and Kateri Tekakwitha for whom our Diocesan Youth Summer Camp is named.

Peace and blessings,

Mary (Elizabeth Margaret) Carter  
Religious Education Coordinator

©2012 Mary Parnell Carter

~~~~~

Sample Prayer asking for a saint's intercession:

*Let us pray,*

*May the intercessions of \_\_\_\_\_ saint's name \_\_\_\_\_,*

*O Lord, commend us to You, that what by our own merits we cannot obtain, we may receive through his/her patronage.*

*Through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

