

## NOTES

Saint - CCC 961; Holy person faithful in the body of Christ. Demonstrates virtues and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

“To Saint Paul, as to all the Catholic Church, all Christians are “saints” by virtue of their baptism. “Saint” means “holy one,” and Christians are made holy not by anything they’ve learned or done, but by the indwelling of almighty God. We are holy because we are temples of the Holy Spirit –and, in Paul’s worldview, nothing on earth is holier than God’s Temple.” (excerpt from Signs of Life , p 197, by Scott Hahn)

Ordinary Saints - faithful follower, normal life, faithful in Heaven

Canonized Saint – special review process and approval by the Pope

Patron Saints - Mediators and intercessors - Seek help and assistance in spiritual needs and petitions to God

Companion Saint -Saint one chooses to bring on spiritual journey. We are all pilgrims on earth are seeking our spiritual path to God in Heaven.

Official saints are worthy of recognition, honor and imitation

**Saints are not to be worshiped;** they are honored and can be involved with intercessory prayer (ie. prayer partner or as an intermediary)

Communion of the Saints – Refers to the fellowship or community that exists between all members of the Church.

Three levels are traditionally identified:

The Church Triumphant – Saints in Heaven

The Church Militant – Believers on earth

The Church Suffering – souls in purgatory – “soul is immortal, only body dies”

Holiness – CCC 2013-14/2028-29: “All are called to holiness” (spiritual perfection)

Heroic Virtue – the desire and effort to serve and pursue a life of holiness

Virtues – Gift of the Spirit (Isaiah) wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude knowledge, piety. Fear of the Lord.

Seven Capital Sins – ccc 1955: pride, avarice, envy, wrath, lust, gluttony and sloth or acedia.

Review of sins can be helpful in the Ignatius method of the examen and spirituality.

## **Ignatius –**

Spirituality is a variety of tools. Outstanding is the examen. Each night, review your day's actions – (reference: prayer card, Matthew Kelly)

The most famous tools of spirituality are spiritual exercises that take four weeks to complete. Each week there is a special emphasis in spiritual growth.

Example: ( abbreviated. Refer to [Loyola.press.com](http://Loyola.press.com) for further detailed exercise; includes prayers, meditations, reflections, imaginative mental exercise)

Week I: “reform the deformed” - Focus: God’s Love

Week II: “ conform the reformed” - Focus: Life of Christ

Week III: “ confirm the conformed” – Focus: Passion and Death of Jesus

Week IV: “transform the confirmed” - Focus: grow with Jesus, joy of resurrection and share in Christ’s mission



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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss your baptismal Saint
2. Discuss your confirmation Saint
3. Discuss your favorite or companion Saint
4. Discuss your patron Saint
5. Discuss what venture, deed stood out in the Saints of the month
6. Give a spiritual testimony in one minute

Excerpts from My Life with the Saints by James Martin, SJ

**Joan of Arc** (*Transcript of the Trial of Joan of Arc*)

Q. How do you know that it is Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine who speak to you?

A. I have told you often enough that they are Saint Margaret and Saint Catherine – believe me if you like.

**Thérèse of Lisieux** (*The Story of a Soul*)

For me, prayer is the heart's impulse, a simple gaze toward heaven. It is a cry of gratitude and love, from the depths of trial as well as the heights of joy. Finally, it is something great, supernatural, that expands my soul and unites me to Jesus.

**Thomas Merton** (*New Seeds of Contemplation*)

For me to be a saint means to be myself. Therefore the problem of sanctity and salvation is in fact the problem of finding out who I am and of discovering my true self.

**Ignatius of Loyola** (*The Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola*)

Until the age of twenty-six he was a man given over to the vanities of the world.

**Pedro Arrupe** (*One Jesuit's Spiritual Journey*)

I am quite happy to be called an optimist, but my optimism is not of the utopian variety. It is based on hope. What is an optimist? I can answer for myself in a very simple fashion: He or she is a person who has the conviction that God knows, can do, and will do what is best for mankind.

**Bernadette Soubirous** (*Ruth Harris, Lourdes: Body and Spirit in the Secular Age*)

Apart from the apparitions, nothing before or after singled her out for special notice. There are only traces in the stories of her interactions and a few letters indicating the strength of her personality and the particularity of her spirituality, but in the residues Bernadette begins to reveal herself to us.

**Mother Teresa** (*MOTHER TERESA*)

You can do something I can't do. I can do something you can't do. Together let us do something beautiful for God.

**Pope John XXII** (*Angelo Roncalli, May 5, 1928*)

Once you have renounced everything, really everything, then any bold enterprise becomes the simplest and most natural thing in all the world.

**Dorothy Day** (*Dorothy Day, The Long Loneliness*)

We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love and that love comes with community.

**Peter** (*Richard Rohr, Soul Brothers*)

On the personal level, which is where it all starts, Peter is a grand and honest statement about how we all come to God. The pattern is a great surprise, and for many a great shock and even a disappointment. We clearly come to God not by doing it right but ironically by doing it wrong.

**Thomas Aquinas** (*St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica*)

To place our purpose within definite limits, we must first investigate the nature and domain of sacred doctrine.

**Francis of Assisi** (*St. Francis of Assisi*)

Preach the gospel. Use words if necessary.

**Joseph** (*Matthew 13:55*)

Is not this the carpenter's son?

**The Ugandan Martyrs** (*Swahili Proverb*)

*Mwamini Munu si mtovu.*

Who trusts in God lacks nothing.

**Aloysius Gonzaga** (*Daniel J. Berrigan, SJ*)

He was tougher than his would-be admirers would have him, both tougher and more tender, enormously more complex, his heaven won by way of a detour through hell.

**Mary** (*Traditional Prayer*)

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with you.

**A Conclusion** (*Pope John XXIII, Journal of a Soul*)

From the Saints I must take the substance, not the accidents, of their virtues. I am not St. Aloysius, nor must I seek holiness in his particular way, but according to the requirements of my own nature, my own character, and the different conditions of my life. I must not be the dry, bloodless reproduction of a model, however perfect. God desires us to follow the examples of the saints by absorbing the vital sap of their virtues and turning it into our own life-blood, adapting it to our own individual capacities and particular circumstances. If St. Aloysius had been as I am, he would have become holy in a different way.

## REFERENCES

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### **From Dynamic Catholic**

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|-----|-------------------|--|
| DC1 | Haddad, Robert M. | <a href="#"><u>1001 Reasons Why It's Great to be Catholic!</u></a> |
| DC2 | Hauser, S.J       | <a href="#"><u>In His Spirit</u></a>                               |
| DC3 | Hunt, Allen R.    | <a href="#"><u>Nine Words</u></a>                                  |
| DC4 | Kelly, Matthew    | <a href="#"><u>Becoming the Best Version of Yourself (DVD)</u></a> |
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# St. Maximilian Kolbe, OFMConv

1894-1941

Raymond Kolbe, as Maximilian was named by his parents, was born in the little village of Zdunska-Wola in Poland on January 7, 1894. His parents were hard-working but poor.

The young Raymond was charged with energy and was exceedingly mischievous. One day, exasperated at Raymond's pranks, his mother said to the boy, "Raymond, what is to become of you?" The question disturbed him so that he went to church, knelt before the statue of the Blessed Virgin and asked her the question: "What is to become of me?" Later, he confided to his mother about the mystical experience that he had. Raymond saw the Blessed Mother. In her hands she held two crowns – a white one for purity and a red one for martyrdom. To the youth, she said, "Which do you choose?" Raymond responded, "I choose both." Silently Our Lady smiled and faded from view.

The family made every sacrifice to support their oldest child, Francis, in studying for the priesthood. One of the planned sacrifices was to keep Raymond at home to help his father. But God had other plans. A local pharmacist noticed how bright Raymond was and tutored him. Eventually, Raymond was able to study with his brother. Raymond had a special talent for mathematics and physics. He was also fascinated by astronomy and the prospects for space flight. In fact, he sketch many plans for rocket ships and , while studying in Rome, actually designed a spacecraft and applied for a patent on it.

Raymond entered the Franciscan seminary in 1910. He was invested in the Franciscan habit and received the new name of Maximilian. During this time of training, however, Maximilian experienced many interior trials. The fascinating world of science drew him away from his ideal of priesthood. Finally, however, he became firm in his desire and made profession. Friar Maximilian's superiors sent him to Rome to study. Friar Maximilian was ordained a priest in 1918.

Friar Maximilian recognized that his mission was to fight against religious indifference. So he founded the Knights of the Immaculata, whose purpose it was to conquer all souls for Christ through Mary. Each member was to dedicate himself to Mary Immaculate and become a tool for her use. He said, "Modern times are dominated by Satan and will be more so in the future. The conflict with hell cannot be engaged by men, even the most clever. The Immaculata alone has from God the promise of victory over Satan." As the organization grew, he began a publication called **The Knight of the Immaculata**. Donations came in. The group and the publication grew rapidly.

During the 1930's Friar Maximilian traveled extensively to promote the publishing apostolate. After spending some time in Japan, Father Kolbe returned to Poland, where he was appointed superior at the City of the Immaculata. World War II broke out. Very quickly, Maximilian's publishing apostolate became the target of the Nazis. He was arrested in 1939 and then released. In February, 1941, Maximilian was again arrested, with four other priests.

In May, 1941, Friar Maximilian, along with many other persons, was transferred to Auschwitz. In this concentration camp; priests were singled out for exceptionally cruel treatment, hardest labor, beatings, and attacks by dogs. Father Kolbe told his fellow prisoners: "No, they will not kill our souls . . . We will not give up. And when we die, then we die pure and peaceful, resigned to God in our hearts." Friar Maximilian gave conditional absolution to each dead person, heard confessions, and prayed and spoke with all who asked for help. He pleaded with fellow prisoners to forgive their persecutors.

After recovering from a lung illness, Father Maximilian was transferred to Block 14 and assigned to farm labor. At roll call one night, one prisoner was missing. According to the rules of the camp, if one prisoner escaped, ten from that cell block had to die. In the next roll call, the commandant went through the ranks pointing out ten victims, who were immediately taken away by armed guards. One Polish soldier, Sergeant Francis Gajowniczek, cried out, "What will happen to my family?" Father Maximilian silently slipped out of the ranks and spoke to the commandant, "I am a Catholic priest from Poland; I would like to take his place, because he has a wife and children." Amazingly, the commandant accepted this request.

Maximilian, with nine companions, entered the starvation bunker. From this time on, the men received neither food nor water. Surprising to the guards, sounds of continuous weeping and wailing did not come from this bunker. Instead were heard murmured prayers, the rosary, hymns to Mary. Friar Maximilian Kolbe tried to console the others. At the end of two weeks, only four were still alive. One was Friar Kolbe. Since the cell was needed for more victims, the camp executioner injected lethal doses of carbolic acid into the arms of the prisoners. Father Kolbe, with a prayer on his lips, raised his arm for the executioner. It was August 14, the eve of the feast of the Assumption of Mary into heaven.

Maximilian Kolbe was beatified by Pope Paul VI in October, 1971. He was canonized as a martyr by John Paul II in October, 1982.

The work of St. Maximilian Kolbe is carried on in the United States by the Franciscans at Marytown in Libertyville, Illinois. This is the headquarters for the Knights of the Immaculata and Youth Mission for the Immaculata.