

The Communion of Saints

Q. 182. What do we mean when we say, “I believe in the Communion of Saints”?

When we say, “I believe in the Communion of Saints,” we mean that we believe that there is a union, a fellowship, of all souls in whom the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ, dwells. This communion is the union of the members of the Church on earth, in heaven, and in Purgatory.

The word “communion” means “union with.” The word “saint” means “holy.” Every Christian soul, incorporated with Christ by Baptism and having within himself the Holy Spirit, is holy so long as he remains in the state of sanctifying grace. In the early Church, all faithful members of the Mystical Body of Christ were called saints.

The Communion of Saints is the unity and cooperation of the members of the Church on earth with those in heaven and those in Purgatory, all of whom are united in the one Mystical Body of Christ.

The faithful on earth are in communion with each other by professing the same faith, by obeying the same authority, and by assisting each other with prayers and good works. They have communion with the saints in heaven by honoring them as glorified members of the Church, by invoking their prayers and aid, and by striving to imitate their virtues. They are in communion with the souls in Purgatory by helping them through prayers and good works, especially through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Church is not only the family of those living in faith here on earth. It is a Communion of Saints. It reaches into eternity, embracing also all who are being purified to enter the Beatific Vision and all who are already rejoicing in the beholding of God’s glory. Our union with those we love who have gone to sleep in the peace of Christ is not in the least interrupted. Their entrance into life has not ended their union with us. Through their entrance into life, we too are brought nearer to God.

Their blessedness is not yet totally fulfilled, for they await the final resurrection and the sharing of that flesh which is part of their being in the joy of eternal life. They await the Last Judgment with the gathering into total newness of life the full number of all the redeemed. But the source of their beatitude is already theirs. They have come to see and to possess their God in the Beatific Vision.

The blessed not only enjoy the blessedness of God’s immediate presence, the indescribable happiness of knowing and loving God as He knows and loves Himself,

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr: John Vianney and Fr: Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

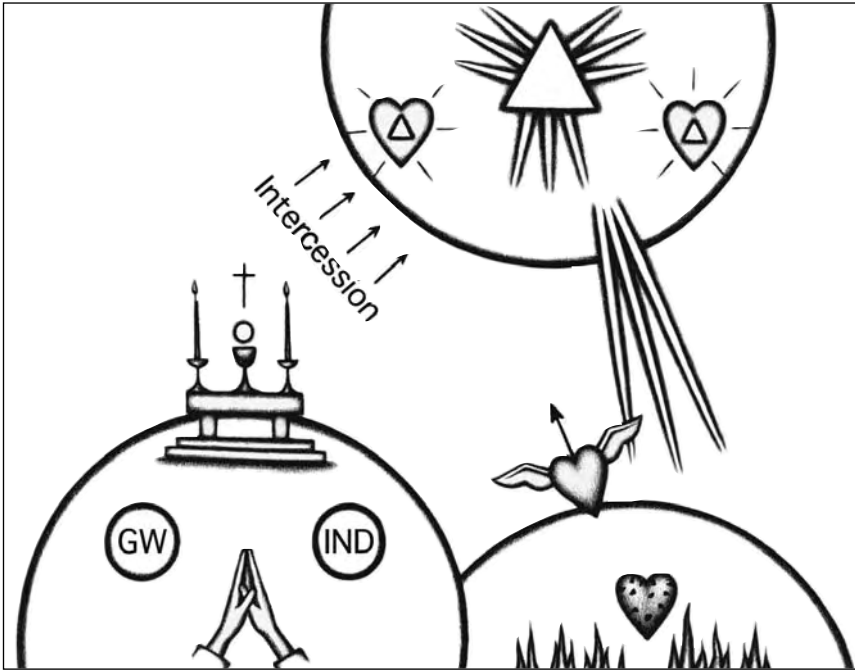
but they also contribute to the building of the Kingdom by praying for their brothers and sisters in Christ who are still here on earth. Their happiness is intensified by the realization that they can influence the salvation of those whom they know and love. They look upon the goodness and share the perfect peace of Christ as they await with joyful longing the final resurrection and final judgment when all will be made perfect in God.

Sacred Scripture

If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. *1 Corinthians 12:26-27*

Catechism by Diagram

#C15-68



Members Helping Each Other. We pray (hands joined) for deceased relatives and friends and all the faithful departed in Purgatory (spotted heart and flames). We offer indulgences (IND) and good works (GW) for them, but the greatest means of helping them and of leading them to God (heart with wings) is the Sacrifice of the Mass (altar). Through the Communion of Saints, we are one with those who share in the life of the larger family of God. We honor the saints (hearts with triangle) who are already with the Lord in heaven and who intercede for us.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

946 After confessing “the holy catholic Church,” the Apostles’ Creed adds “the communion of saints.” In a certain sense this article is a further explanation of the preceding: “What is the Church if not the assembly of all the saints?”²¹ The communion of saints is the Church.

Splendor of Truth

The Church, as a wise teacher of morality, has always invited believers to seek and to find in the saints, and above all in the Virgin Mother of God ‘full of grace’ and ‘all-holy,’ the model, the strength and the joy needed to live a life in accordance with God’s commandments and the Beatitudes of the Gospel. (section 107)

Vatican Council II

When the Lord will come in glory, and all his angels with him (cf. Mt. 25:31), death will be no more and all things will be subject to him (cf. 1 Cor. 15:26-27). But at the present time some of his disciples are pilgrims on earth. Others have died and are being purified, while still others are in glory, contemplating “in full light, God himself triune and one, exactly as he is.” All of us, however, in varying degrees and in different ways share in the same charity towards God and our neighbors, and we all sing the one hymn of glory to our God. All, indeed, who are of Christ and who have his Spirit form one Church and in Christ cleave together (Eph. 4:16). *The Church*, 49

Summary Prayer

Our Father, protect those whom You have united and look kindly on all who follow Jesus Your Son. We are consecrated to You by our Baptism; make us one in the fullness of our faith and keep us one in the fellowship of love through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

#W2-18

**Q. 183. Why is the Church called the Church Militant?**

The Church is called the Church Militant because it is the Church here on earth which is still fighting against sin and error. It is also called the Pilgrim Church, since its ultimate goal is heaven, rather than earth.

If we should fall into mortal sin, we do not cease to be members of the Communion of Saints, but we are cut off from all spiritual communion with our fellow Christians as long as we continue to exclude the Holy Spirit from our souls.

Sacred Scripture

“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven has suffered violence, and men of violence take it by force.” *Matthew 11:12*

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

Sacred Scripture

Q. 183. 2 Thess 1:4-5; Heb 3:12-14.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Q. 183. Paragraphs 2725, 2848-2849.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; above all taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. *Ephesians 6:10-17*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

827 “Christ, holy, innocent, and undefiled,¹ knew nothing of sin, but came only to expiate the sins of the people. The Church, however, clasping sinners to her bosom, at once holy and always in need of purification, follows constantly the path of penance and renewal.”² All members of the Church, including her ministers, must acknowledge that they are sinners.³ In everyone, the weeds of sin will still be mixed with the good wheat of the Gospel until the end of time.³ Hence the Church gathers sinners already caught up in Christ’s salvation but still on the way to holiness: “The Church is therefore holy, though having sinners in her midst, because she herself has no other life but the life of grace. If they live her life, her members are sanctified; if they move away from her life, they fall into sins and disorders that prevent the radiation of her sanctity. This is why she suffers and does penance for those offenses, of which she has the power to free her children through the blood of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.”⁴

Splendor of Truth

It is the Gospel which reveals the full truth about man and his moral journey, and thus enlightens and admonishes sinners; it proclaims to them God’s mercy, which is constantly at work to preserve them both from despair at their inability fully to know and keep God’s law and from the presumption that they can be saved without merit. God also reminds sinners of the joy of forgiveness, which alone grants the strength to see in the moral law a liberating truth, a grace-filled source of hope, a path of life. (*section 112*)

Vatican Council II

The Church... which is called “that Jerusalem which is above” and “our mother” (Gal. 4:26; cf. Apoc. 12:17), is described as the spotless spouse of the spotless lamb (Apoc. 19:7; 21:2 and 9; 22:17). It is she whom Christ “loved and for whom he delivered himself up that he might sanctify her” (Eph. 5:26). It is she whom he unites to himself by an unbreakable alliance, and whom he constantly “nourishes and cherishes” (Eph. 5:29). It is she whom, once purified, he willed to be joined to himself, subject in love and fidelity (cf. Eph. 5:24), and whom, finally, he filled with heavenly gifts for all eternity, in order that we may know that love of God and of Christ for us, a love which surpasses all understanding (cf. Eph. 3:19). While on earth she journeys in a foreign land away from the Lord (cf. 2 Cor. 5:6), the Church sees herself as an exile. She seeks and is concerned about those things which are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, where the life of the Church is hidden with Christ in God until she appears in glory with her Spouse (cf. Col. 3:1-4). *The Church, 6*

Summary Prayer

Lord, unite Your Church in the Holy Spirit that we may serve You with all our hearts and work together with unselfish love. Teach us to value all the good You give us in the Catholic Church. Make us strong in faith, through Jesus Christ our Lord to Whom with You and the Holy Spirit be all honor and glory. Amen.

Q. 184. How do we help each other?

We upon earth must pray for one another so we may all be faithful to our obligations as members of the Communion of Saints. We must also perform the spiritual and corporal works of mercy.

Sacred Scripture

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men. *1 Timothy 2:1*

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another. *Heb 10:23-25*

Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man has great power in its effects. *James 5:16*

**Catechism of the Catholic Church**

2634 Intercession is a prayer of petition which leads us to pray as Jesus did. He is the one intercessor with the Father on behalf of all men, especially sinners.¹ He is “able for all time to save those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.”² The Holy Spirit “himself intercedes for us... and intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.”³

Vatican Council II

The Council lays stress on respect for the human person: everyone should look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as another self, bearing in mind above all his life and the means necessary for living it in a dignified way. *Modern World, 27*

Q. 185. What is the Church Suffering?

The Church Suffering, or the Church Expectant, consists of the souls in Purgatory. This is the Church of all the faithful departed who are saved but are still being purified in purgatorial suffering. They cannot see God, but the Holy Spirit is in them. Being made ready for heaven, they will never again sin.

For commentaries on each question with Cardinal Arinze, Sr. John Vianney and Fr. Straub (in Spanish), see Appendix E.

Sacred Scripture

And they turned to prayer, beseeching that the sin which had been committed might be wholly blotted out. And the noble Judas exhorted the people to keep themselves free from sin, for they had seen with their own eyes what had happened because of the sin of those who had fallen. He also took up a collection, man by man, to the amount of two thousand drachmas of silver, and sent it to Jerusalem to provide for a sin offering. In doing this he acted very well and honorably, taking account of the resurrection. For if he were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin. *2 Maccabees 12:42-45*

Each man's work will become manifest; for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire. *1 Corinthians 3:13-15*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1031 The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.¹ The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:² "As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come."³

Vatican Council II

In full consciousness of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the Church in its pilgrim members, from the very earliest days of the Christian religion, has honored with great respect the memory of the dead; and, "because it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from their sins" (2 Mac. 12:46) she offers her suffrages for them. *The Church, 50*

Summary Prayer

Most Providential Father, keep the Church faithful to its mission: may it be a leaven in the world that renews us in Christ and transforms us into Your family. May the Church continue to grow in holiness through the sacrifice of Christ which gave it life.

Lord God, You are the glory of believers and the life of the just. Your Son redeemed us by dying and rising to life again. Since our departed brothers and sisters believed in the mystery of Your Son's Resurrection, let them share in the joys and blessings of the life to come.

God our Creator, by Your power Christ conquered death and returned to You in glory. May all the people who have gone before us in faith share His victory and enjoy the vision of Your glory forever. May His perfect sacrifice free them from the power of death and give them eternal life; may it bring them peace and forgiveness. Bring the new life which You gave them in Baptism to the fullness of eternal joy. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen.

#D2-21



Q. 186. What is our duty toward the deceased?

We must have reverence toward the bodies of those who have gone before us in death, and we must pray for the souls of our deceased relatives and friends, and all of the faithful departed. We show respect for the bodies of the deceased because they were temples of the Holy Spirit and are destined to rise gloriously.

We can help the suffering members of God’s family whose souls are being purified in Purgatory by our prayers and sacrifices, especially by participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The souls in Purgatory also benefit from indulgences that are obtained for them. They can and do pray for us, even though they cannot help themselves. Through the Communion of Saints, we are one with those loved ones and friends of ours who rest in Christ. Once they are numbered among the saints in heaven, they will be our special intercessors with God.

Sacred Scripture

But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. *1 Thessalonians 4:13-14*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1032 This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: “Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.”¹ From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God.² The Church also commends almsgiving,

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indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead: “Let us help and commemorate them. If Job’s sons were purified by their father’s sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them.”²³

Vatican Council II

This sacred council accepts loyally the venerable faith of our ancestors in the living communion which exists between us and our brothers who are in the glory of heaven or who are yet being purified after their death. *The Church, 51*

Summary Prayer

God, our Father, may the Sacrifice of the Mass wash away our sins in the blood of Christ. You cleansed us in the waters of Baptism; in Your loving mercy, grant us pardon and peace. In the sacrament of the Eucharist, You give us Your crucified and risen Son. Bring to the glory of the Resurrection the departed souls who have been purified by this holy mystery. We ask this in the most holy name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.



#P26-38

Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. Who are included in the Communion of Saints? How are they united to each other?
2. As a member of the Church Militant, or Pilgrim Church, how can you be united to the other members of the Church Militant, as well as to the members of the Church Suffering and the Church Triumphant?
3. Offer a prayer or sacrifice to Jesus, through Mary, in reparation for sin for the souls in Purgatory. Pray the Creed slowly and reflectively.

Q. 187. What is the Church Triumphant?

The Church Triumphant consists of all the souls of the blessed in heaven. It is the Church of all those in heavenly glory who have triumphed over their evil inclinations, the seductions of the world, and the temptations of the evil spirit.

Sacred Scripture

But he who endures to the end will be saved. *Matthew 24:13*

Who are these, clothed in white robes, and whence have they come?... These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night within his temple; and he who sits upon the throne will shelter them with his presence. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; the sun shall not strike them, nor any scorching heat. For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water; and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. *Revelation 7:13-17*



#H9-3

Catechism of the Catholic Church

1023 Those who die in God's grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they "see him as he is," face to face:¹

"By virtue of our apostolic authority, we define the following: According to the general disposition of God, the souls of all the saints... and other faithful who died after receiving Christ's holy Baptism (provided they were not in need of purification when they died,... or, if they then did need or will need some purification, when they have been purified after death,...) already before they take up their bodies again and before the general judgment—and this since the Ascension of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ into heaven—have been, are and will be in heaven, in the heavenly Kingdom and celestial paradise with Christ, joined to the company of the holy angels. Since the Passion and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, these souls have seen and do see the divine essence with an intuitive vision, and even face to face, without the mediation of any creature."⁷²

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Splendor of Truth

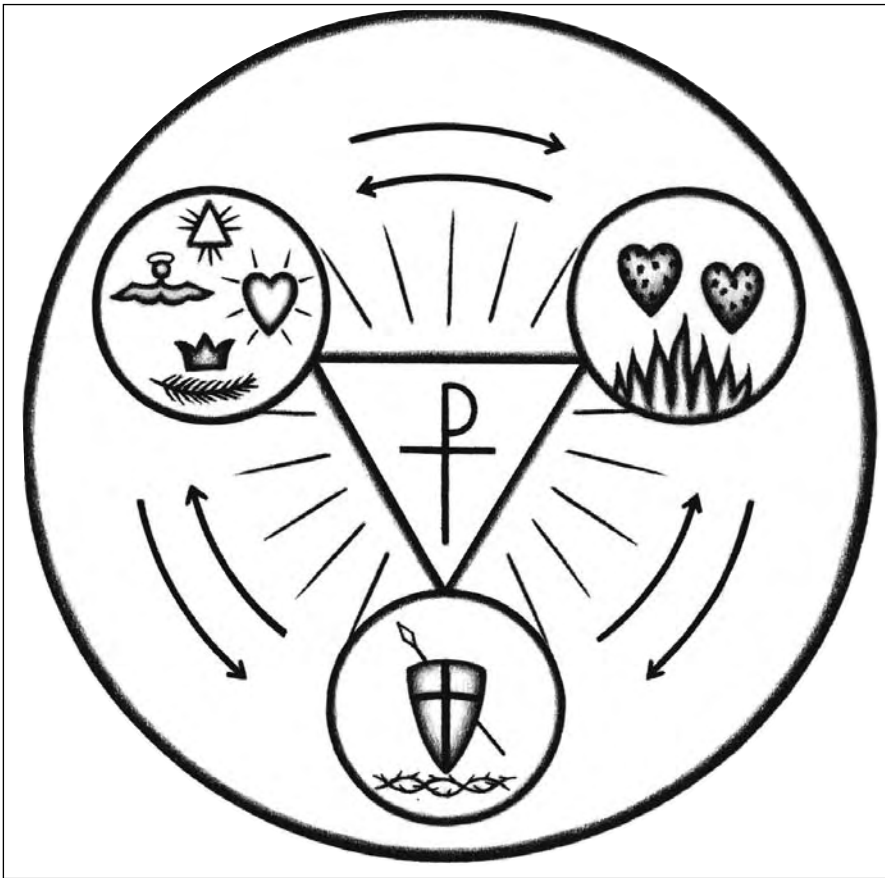
But temptations can be overcome, sins can be avoided, because together with the commandments the Lord gives us the possibility of keeping them... Keeping God's law in particular situations can be difficult, extremely difficult, but it is never impossible. (section 102)

Vatican Council II

Our communion with these in heaven, provided that it is understood in the full light of faith, in no way diminishes the worship of adoration given to God the Father, through Christ, in the Spirit; on the contrary, it greatly enriches it. *The Church, 51*

Catechism by Diagram

#C15-67



The Communion of Saints. There exists a union, a fellowship, among souls in whom the Holy Spirit dwells through sanctifying grace. He is the Spirit of Christ (monogram). This fellowship (three circles) includes the Church Militant, the Church Suffering, and the Church Triumphant. The Church Militant: members of the Church on earth who must practice and defend their faith (cross, shield, spear) at the cost of self-sacrifice (thorns). The Church Suffering: the souls in Purgatory who are established in grace forever, even though minor sins and debts of penance (spots on hearts) still have to be cleansed away (flames). The Church Triumphant: the souls of the blessed in heaven, the everlasting Church, now triumphantly enjoying (crown, palm of victory) the vision of God (triangle), into which, after the Last Judgment, will be absorbed the Church Militant and the Church Suffering (angel, heart in sanctifying grace).

188. Why does the Church honor the canonized saints?

The Church honors the canonized saints who are already with the Lord in heaven because they inspire us by the good example of their lives, and because they can help us by their prayers.

We must honor the saints not just because they can and will pray for us, but also because our love for God demands it. The saints are masterpieces of God's grace; when we honor them, we are honoring their Maker, their Sanctifier, and their Redeemer. The saints inspire us by the heroic example of their lives. To them we pray, asking their intercession with God for us.

Jesus, having entered into glory and as the eternal High Priest, continues to pray for us. Mary, ever associated with her Son, prays for us with Him. She is not alone in this; the whole community of the blessed in heaven imitates Christ in their continual concern for us. As we pray for one another upon earth and for the souls in Purgatory, so our brothers and sisters in heaven intercede for us. We are united with all of them by intimate bonds of Christian love. Mary, our spiritual mother, however, has an altogether exceptional role in this union. Among those who have been redeemed by her Son, her intercessory power is by far the most extensive and effective.

#R2_4-13



To invoke the intercession of the saints, including Mary, is really to pray that, together with them, we may grow in the love of the triune God, Who wills the salvation of all; it is to express the longing that the saints, living in personal love of

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God, will also embrace us in that personal God-given love, and will, by their prayers, assist us in obtaining benefits from God.

When we honor the canonized (and uncanonized) saints, we are honoring many of our own loved ones who now are with God in heaven, because every soul in heaven is a saint.

#S2-271



Sacred Scripture

And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. *Revelation 5:8*

I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!" *Revelation 7:9-10*

And the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God. *Revelation 8:4*

Catechism of the Catholic Church

956 *The intercession of the saints.* "Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness.... [T]hey do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus.... So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped."¹

Splendor of Truth

The Church proposes the example of numerous Saints who bore witness to and defended moral truth even to the point of enduring martyrdom, or who preferred death to a single mortal sin. In raising them to the honor of the altars, the Church has canonized their witness and declared the truth of their judgment, according to which the love of God entails the obligation to respect his commandments, even in the most dire of circumstances, and the refusal to betray those commandments, even for the sake of saving one's own life. (*section 91*)

Martyrdom... bears splendid witness both to the holiness of God's law and to the inviolability of the personal dignity of man, created in God's image and likeness. (*section 92*)

Vatican Council II

The Church has always believed that the apostles and Christ's martyrs, who gave the supreme witness of faith and charity by the shedding of their blood, are closely united with us in Christ; she has always venerated them, together with the Blessed Virgin Mary and the holy angels, with a special love, and has asked piously for the help of their intercession. Soon there were added to these others who had chosen to imitate more closely the virginity and poverty of Christ, and still others whom the outstanding practice of the Christian virtues and the wonderful graces of God recommended to the pious devotion and imitation of the faithful. *The Church, 50*

To look on the life of those who have faithfully followed Christ is to be inspired with a new reason for seeking the city which is to come (cf. Heb. 13:14 and 11:10), while at the same time we are taught to know a most safe path by which, despite the vicissitudes of the world, and in keeping with the state of life and condition proper to each of us, we will be able to arrive at perfect union with Christ, that is, holiness. God shows to men, in a vivid way, his presence and his face in the lives of those companions of ours in the human condition who are more perfectly transformed into the image of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). He speaks to us in them and offers us a sign of this kingdom, to which we are powerfully attracted, so great a cloud of witnesses is there given (cf. Heb. 12:1) and such a witness to the truth of the Gospel.

It is not merely by the title of example that we cherish the memory of those in heaven; we seek, rather, that by this devotion to the exercise of fraternal charity the union of the whole Church in the Spirit may be strengthened (cf. Eph. 4:1-6). Exactly as Christian communion between men on their earthly pilgrimage brings us closer to Christ, so our community with the saints joins us to Christ, from whom as from its fountain and head issues all grace and the life of the People of God itself. It is most fitting, therefore, that we love those friends and co-heirs of Jesus Christ who are also our brothers and outstanding benefactors, and that we give due thanks to God for them, "humbly invoking them, and having recourse to their prayers, their aid and help in obtaining from God through his Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord, our only Redeemer and Savior, the benefits we need." Every authentic witness of love, indeed, offered by us to those who are in heaven tends to and terminates in Christ, "the crown of all the saints," and through him in God who is wonderful in his saints and is glorified in them. *The Church, 50*

The authentic cult of the saints does not consist so much in a multiplicity of external acts, but rather in a more intense practice of our love, whereby, for our own greater good and that of the Church, we seek from the saints "example in their way of life, fellowship in their communion, and the help of their intercession." *The Church, 51*

The Church has also included in the annual cycle memorial days of the martyrs and other saints. Raised up to perfection by the manifold grace of God and already in possession of eternal salvation, they sing God's perfect praise in heaven and pray for us. By celebrating their anniversaries the Church proclaims achievement of the paschal mystery in the saints who have suffered and have been glorified with Christ. She proposes them to the faithful as examples who draw all men to the Father through Christ, and through their merits she begs for God's favors. *Sacred Liturgy, 104*



Summary Prayer

Heavenly Father, we honor the saints who consecrated their lives to Christ for the sake of the Kingdom of Heaven. What love You show us as You recall mankind to its innocence and invite us to taste on earth the gifts of the world to come. With the saints and all the angels, we praise You forever, through Jesus Christ our Lord to Whom with You and God the Holy Spirit be all honor and glory. Amen.

Doctrine • Moral • Worship Exercise (see Appendix B for answer key)

1. Why do we honor the Blessed Virgin Mary and the canonized saints? What role should they play in our lives?
2. Do you have a favorite saint? How can you imitate your favorite saint's virtues in your daily life?
3. Start a novena to your favorite saint. Pray for the conversion of sinners and for world peace.

Chapter Summary Prayer

Good Shepherd, You made us, and we belong to You; You are our first beginning and our last end. In union with all Your saints, we praise and thank You for Your enduring love.

Preserve, O God, those who take refuge in You. By the power of Christ's Resurrection from the dead, may we attain to the fullness of joy in Your presence, in union with all Your saints.

Father, we ask You to give us victory and peace. In Jesus Christ, our Lord and King, we are already seated at Your right hand. We look forward to praising You in the fellowship of all Your saints in our heavenly homeland.

Lord God, You are glorified in Your saints, for their glory is the crowning of Your gifts. In their lives on earth, You give us an example; in our communion with them, You give us their friendship; in their prayer for the Church,

You give us strength and protection. The great company of witnesses spurs us on to victory, so that we may share their prize of everlasting glory.

We honor the saints who live in Your holy city, the heavenly Jerusalem, our mother. Around Your throne the saints, our brothers and sisters, sing Your praises forever. Their glory fills us with joy, and their communion with us in Your Church gives us inspiration and strength, as we hasten on our pilgrimage of faith eager to meet them. With their great company, and all the angels, we praise Your glory, now and forever. Amen.

Family Wisdom Library: Chapter 53

See Appendix A for more references.

Q. 182. What do we mean when we say, “I believe in the Communion of Saints”?

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 13;
The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People, John Paul II, sect. 18-20, 32.*

Q. 183. Why is the Church called the Church Militant?

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 13, 49, 51;
Splendor of Truth, John Paul II, sect. 68, 70.*

Q. 184. How do we help each other?

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 12, 13, 49, 51;
The Lay Members of Christ’s Faithful People, John Paul II, sect. 32, 40;
On the Dignity and Vocation of Women, John Paul II, sect. 7.*

Q. 185. What is the Church Suffering?

Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 49, 51.

Q. 186. What is our duty toward the deceased?

Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 49, 51.

Q. 187. What is the Church Triumphant?

Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 49, 51.

Q. 188. Why does the Church honor the canonized saints?

*Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), Vatican II, sect. 49, 50;
Splendor of Truth, John Paul II, sect. 89-90, 92-94, 102, 119.*



Thought Provokers

Please see Appendix C for the answers.

- Q. 182: Catholics are encouraged to seek the intercession of the saints in Heaven. Protestants are not. Why not?
- Q. 183: As Soldiers of Christ in the Church Militant on earth, what are some of the ways in which we can fight sin and error?
- Q. 184: On the level of marriage and the family, what is one of modern man’s greatest needs?
- Q. 185: Many today reject the Church’s teaching on Purgatory in favor of the false doctrine of reincarnation. How would you defend the Church’s teaching in this area?
- Q. 186: It can be argued that Masses, prayers, indulgences, almsgiving and other good works for the Poor Souls in Purgatory are of greater worth than the spiritual good works which we perform on behalf of those still on earth. Why?
- Q. 187: Do all canonized saints enter immediately into the Church Triumphant upon death and their particular judgment?
- Q. 188: Why are there so few canonized saints among the laity?