

The Communion of Saints

Know What: Why we choose saint names for use during the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Know Why: Help students and sponsors understand the importance of Catholic saints as mentors for those choosing the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Know How: Aid students in knowledgeably choosing a saint name for Confirmation.

Well first of all this is a big job – tying two essential beliefs of our Catholic Faith together is going to get a bit messy. However, I think we can help clear the air just a bit for you. First of all, let's begin in prayer. Would you pray with me the following prayer that we often find ourselves praying together in Mass.

Let's begin with the sign of our faith: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ,
his only Son,
our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

Amen.

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This prayer, the Creed or Profession of Faith is a detailed statement of the major points of our faith. It is not only a prayer that we use at Mass but is the source of what makes us Catholic Christians.

For the purposes of our journey today I would like to focus on one particular statement from the Apostle's Creed: "*I believe. . . in the communion of saints.*" This can seem to be a very simple statement that we have offered in prayer countless times. But perhaps it is essential at this time as we journey toward the Sacrament of Confirmation and as Disciples of Jesus Christ who are set on embracing a life of following Jesus, that we take a fresh look at this concept. Let's begin with two definitions to refresh our memory:

communion - the sharing or exchanging of intimate thoughts and feelings, especially when the exchange is on a mental or spiritual level. (Not to be confused with Holy Communion in which we, the Church share in the sacramental elements of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ on the most earthly way possible).

saints - A name given in the New Testament to Christians generally (Colossians 1:2) but early restricted to persons who were eminent for holiness. In the strict sense saints are those who distinguish themselves by heroic virtue during life and whom the Church honors as saints either by her ordinary universal teaching authority or by a solemn definition called canonization. The Church's official recognition of sanctity implies that the persons are now in heavenly glory, that they may be publicly invoked everywhere, and that their virtues during life or martyr's death are a witness and example to the Christian faithful. (*Catholic Dictionary*)

Please take a few minutes to set aside this document, pick up your Bible and read carefully Chapter 11 & 12: 1-13 from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews.

Welcome back! I hope you enjoyed your time with God's Living Word. Those passages will give you a basis for which to begin our exploration of the *communion of saints*. For a modern interpretation of the communion of saints in our church I would like to turn to Fr. Mike Schmitz; director of youth and young adult ministry for the Diocese of Duluth, and chaplain for the Newman Center at the University of Minnesota Duluth:

All Saints Day Pep Talk

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Take a few minutes to reflect on and answer the following questions:

1. Who are the heroes/heroines (mentors) in your life right now?
2. What is it you see in them that makes you want to learn from or follow them?
3. Do you want to say “Yes” to Jesus’ invitation to follow him?
4. Who are the people close to you who are mentoring you in the life of a disciple?
5. Did you realize that a “... great cloud of witnesses...” are ready to cheer you on in running this marathon of discipleship? How can you enlist their assistance?

In my own life mentors have played an extremely important role. When I was working in the bowling business as a mechanic I greatly admired a carpenter/lane installer by the name of Gary. Although we crossed paths only a few times a year I was always probing him with questions: how the lanes were constructed, specifics on installations he had done in the past, things that could trip him up and put him behind in his work, and about specific measurements that a carpenter needed to know in his business ~ he always had a measurement answer, often down to the fraction of an inch. I remember being in Kansas City, MO with him on the first pinsetter installation I was in charge of – a very large job that required me to supervise a crew installing 32 machines on the lanes that Gary was installing. The first afternoon I was there I was a bit overwhelmed. Fresh off the airplane I walked into the very empty bowling center and had a difficult time wondering where I would begin. Gary must have sensed my anxiety and walked over to say: “Just do what you know how to do and I can help with any questions you might have along the way.” Those simple words gave me the encouragement to break out of my bewilderment and dig in. While there were some stumbling blocks and learning experiences along the way his words and guidance gave me the courage to get started on the work at hand.

In my faith life too, there have been many mentors/members of this “cloud of witnesses.” My mother and father taught me so much about the importance of regular faith practices and of the importance of staying connected to your community~ and they didn’t just say it, they were living examples of what it took. Official saints have also been an inspiration and source of encouragement for me. Many of you are aware that I enjoy a good joke, am genuinely joyful about my life as a disciple of Jesus Christ and long to bring the joy of Jesus Christ to others. A saint with whom I connected was a Mexican priest by the name of Miguel

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Pro. I could talk a lot about what I have learned about him, however it might be time for a little break from my voice.

Please take a few minutes to follow the link below to learn more about Blessed Miguel Pro. P.S...be sure to watch the video too:

[Blessed Miguel Pro](#)

I hope that you are beginning to get an idea on the importance of the communion of saints in our journey as disciples of Jesus Christ, especially now as you prepare to receive a full measure of the grace of the Holy Spirit poured out in the Sacrament of Confirmation. Jesus Christ truly wants us to choose to follow him as his disciples and he freely gives us the grace and the people in our lives that will assist us in this mission. One of the greatest realities about our church is that we are never alone. The members of our community and the saints are there to support us and to intercede on our behalf to God. So who would you choose to be your Confirmation Saint? The resource below will give you an idea of who some other students have chosen:

[Name Your Confirmation Saint](#)

Alright it is time for you to set out into the deep of choosing your own Confirmation Saint Name. Below are steps that will assist you in this journey:

1. Visit the following page provided by the Archdiocese of Milwaukee:

[Confirmation Names](#)

2. The above page will share guidelines for choosing a saint name as well as online and print resources on researching saint names.
3. Please do your research to find the saint that is “right” for you.
4. Finally visit the Google Form below and complete your choice of Confirmation Saint Name. I ask that you complete this task no later than May 3rd.

[Confirmation Saint Name Form](#)

Thank you all for being an important part of St. Mary Catholic Faith Community and our universal Church. Know that you are always in my thoughts and prayers.

In Christ,

Jeff Kacala
Dir. Catholic Formation