

Lesson 8: Saints

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IUGRdpRJWYA&t=97s>

The process of becoming a saint in the eyes of the Catholic Church isn't an easy one. It generally takes years of investigation and interviews to get to a point where miracles are then required.

Here are the steps involved in being named a saint:

Step 1: Die: Unfortunately, the first thing you have to do to become a saint is to die. The purpose of being dead before becoming a saint is an important one -- you have the benefit of being in heaven along with God.

Step 2: Servant of God: This is where the process of naming a saint gets put into motion. While it's generally five years after a person dies before the process can begin, there have been some exceptions.

- There are three things to look at if a person is to be considered for sainthood (canonization is the Church's term).
 - First, the person must be thought of as having "heroic virtue;"
 - Second, they must be thought of as being in heaven
 - Third, they must be recognized by the Catholic Church for the sake of the faithful still here on Earth.
- This step generally begins when people petition the bishop of the diocese where the potential saint lived to begin an investigation into that person's life. The bishop will interview people who knew the person, collect the person's writings, etc., then will write a report to determine if the next step should be taken. If the report is favorable, the person gains the status of "Servant of God."

Step 3: Venerable: If the person is deemed "Servant of God," then the findings of the local bishop are sent to Rome to the Congregation of the Causes of Saints. The investigation into the life of the person will continue, with a positive outcome being the person is deemed a person of "heroic virtue."

- As part of this process a person called a "devil's advocate" raises questions and objections to the candidate's sainthood to make sure all aspects of the person's life is examined.
- The congregation will also investigate the circumstances of the person's death if they were killed – determining if the person was killed for his or her faith. The person is known as "Venerable" if they pass this stage. According to the Church, people may seek their intercession in prayer at this point.

- Intercession is an important point in the process, and is what will move everything else along. To become a saint, miracles are required, and the miracles come for a petitioner praying to the person for help. The miracles must be documented and investigated. There must not be means other than divine intervention that could have caused the miracle.
- In the Catholic Church, at least two [miracles](#) by the saint's intercession must be proven. This means that, because the person is believed to be in heaven, someone must pray for the saint to pray for them in heaven. If the prayer is answered and a miracle happens, then they know that the person is a saint. The miracles prove that the saint must be in heaven with God, and able to ask God for prayers to be answered.

Step 4: Blessed: If a person claims a miracle happened due to intercession by the person in heaven, and it is investigated, confirmed and approved by the pope, then the would-be saint's status is moved to "Blessed." This process is called beatification. A ceremony is held when a person is seen as "Blessed," usually in that person's home town or country.

Step 5: Saint: After the four previous steps are completed, there's just one more, but it's a big one. A second miracle must be investigated and confirmed. Once that happens, the person may be named a Saint. If they are, they are assigned a feast day on which they will be celebrated. A Mass at the Vatican usually follows that. These people then enter into the canon, or list, of saints.

It is not correct to say that the Church "makes" someone a saint. The Catholic Church believes that anyone who is in heaven is already a saint. The canonization process just finds out for sure, or without a doubt, that someone is a saint.

The Pope has the option to shorten any part of the process – including waiving the requirement for one or both miracles and not waiting to start the process until the person has been dead for five years.

The road to sainthood



LOCAL REQUEST

A person's local bishop gathers information and sends a petition to the Vatican. If the Vatican agrees to consider that person for sainthood, they receive the title

"SERVANT OF GOD"



VATICAN REVIEW

After reviewing materials and conducting more research, a Vatican council decides if the person lived a life of "heroic virtue." If it decides "yes" then the person is called

"VENERABLE"



BEATIFICATION

If the church finds proof of a miracle that it believes was caused by the intercession of the person, he or she can be beatified. Beatified people are called

"BLESSED"



CANONIZATION

The final step usually requires proof of a second miracle, although popes have waived this in a handful of cases recently. Once canonized, a person is officially called a

"SAINT"

Note: Martyrs don't need proof of a miracle to be beatified.

Source: Catholic Education Resource Center

THE WASHINGTON POST

