

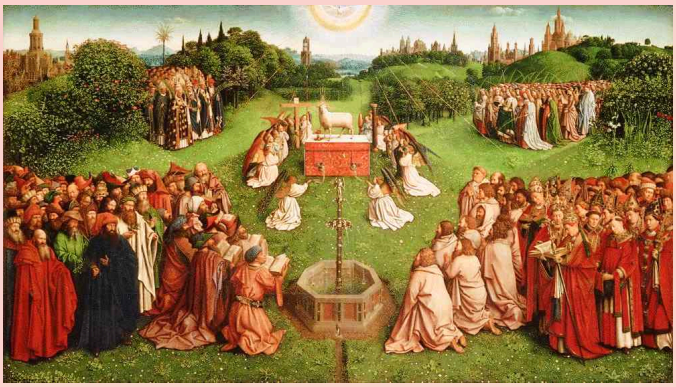
All Saints Day — November 1, 2026

Models, Mentors, and Guides in the Communion of Saints

Dear Friends,

If you were lucky enough to have believing Catholic parents, they probably named you after a saint or **gave you a patron saint at birth.** If not, perhaps you chose a saint who appealed to your soul in a special way.

Maybe you even discovered that *you had been chosen* by some great saint who became a model or mentor for you on your spiritual journey. That happens!



To live a vital spiritual life means to be saint-oriented, not in a way that distracts from love of Christ, but in a healthy way that inspires us and leads us *to* Christ.

Saints, **the holy friends of God, are sacred windows** that give us a glimpse into the life of the Trinity and show us how all the Gospel virtues can be lived. We are blessed to be in this company, which the Book of Hebrews calls “the great cloud of witnesses” (Heb 12:1).

Cloud Not Platform

As famous as many of them are, saints don’t operate like the celebrities and secular influencers who promote themselves all over social media these days. They have much too common sense to engage in nonsense like that, but they are kind of like spiritual **entrepreneurs, creative and enterprising** in the ways they can help us if for no other reason than that they have been in our shoes and have also walked this difficult journey to heaven.

If I may indulge in a couple of technology metaphors, saints have been *uploaded to the cloud* (of witnesses) by Christ, but they don’t manage their own personal platforms. **None of them have Instagram accounts.**

The saints, by definition, are holy, dynamic individuals who reached the heights of sanctity in this life, but not one of them got there on their own merits or talents alone.

They achieved holiness through their **connection to the larger body of believers,** the Church, which we sometimes call the “communion of saints.”

That’s the Church’s shorthand for the timeless connection between the glorified saints in heaven, the souls being purified in purgatory, and the rest of us believers fighting the good fight here on earth. As they say, **we’re all in this together.**



A Group Activity

That’s also why saints are so often found in pairs, groups, and teams throughout Church history. The **communion of saints begins in the here-and-now,** in the heart of the Church on earth. Saintly people (not all of whom get canonized) are always working with others in real time to bring society out of darkness and into the light of Christ.

I find it fascinating that even the saints who lived solitary lives in the desert were not isolated from communal dimension of the Church. You may know of the great St. Anthony (250-350 AD—he was **over 100 when he died)**. He renounced everything and went off by himself to the desert to pray for his soul.

Yet, he was **so united to the Spirit and Church of Christ** that he *inadvertently* ended up with a band of devoted followers. They were all attracted to his sanctity like moths to a flame. That’s the way holiness works best, like a magnet, not a megaphone.

Saint-Gazing

On All Saints Day, the Church wants us to indulge in a little saint-gazing, and I’d like to point out some of the **amazing saint pairs, teams, and tight-knit holy families** we find throughout history. The groupings listed below consist of people who found spiritual kinship of one type or another in a mission, even if that mission was forming and maintaining a holy family life.

I’m omitting the larger organized groups we call religious orders (except for the Jesuit founders below). Religious orders may be the best (earthly) models of the communion of saints we have, but there are too many examples of them to list here!

Furthermore, this list of saints includes **only canonized or beatified saints** because they are the most notable. Needless to say, even among the canonized, our list could be much, much longer, not to mention the countless non-canonized saints of the Church. So, check out these amazing assemblies of saints. They are like icing on the Church’s cake of sanctity throughout history



Holy Families and Sibling Saints

The Cappadocians (4th century)—I wrote about this extraordinary family in a previous newsletter. St. Basil's family from Northern Turkey counts no fewer than *eight* saints (martyrs and canonized saints) spanning three generations!

Sts. Monica and Augustine (4th—5th centuries)—mother and son; their story is fully and beautifully detailed in St. Augustine's classic autobiography, *Confessions*.

Sts. Benedict and Scholastica (5th—6th centuries)—brother and sister; they escaped the corruption of the world after the Fall of Rome and ended up establishing the male and female branches of the religious order we know as the Benedictines.

Sts. Cyril and Methodius (9th century)—the two Greek brothers who evangelized the Slavic peoples and are known to history as the "Apostles to the Slavs".

The Martin Family (19th—20th centuries)—St. Therese of Lisieux's family; her parents (Zelie and Louis Martin) were canonized in 2015, and one of her sisters (Léonie), was declared Venerable in the same year.

The Fatima Children (20th century)—brother and sister, Francisco and Jacinta Martos, were canonized in 2017, and the cause for the canonization of their cousin, Sr. Lucia, was opened in 2008.



Friend Saints

Sts. Perpetua and Felicity (early 3rd century)—the two friends were martyred in North African persecution in 203 AD. While they were from different social classes, they are both famous for being young mothers who chose to renounce life and family rather than to renounce Christ.

Sts. Pontian and Hippolytus (mid-3rd century)—pope and bishop, this unlikely pair were not initially friends but rivals (Hippolytus was actually the first anti-pope!); they reconciled and became friends while they were in exile in the salt mines of Sardinia where both were martyred.

Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen (4th century)—the patron saints of friends were called “two streams of one river”; Basil is one of the Cappadocians and Gregory had two other siblings who are canonized saints in the Eastern Church.

Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher (16th century)—these two men were the first victims of the homicidal Henry VIII when they refused to accept his illegitimate re-marriage or his plan to declare himself Head of the Church.



“Influencer” Saints

For lack of a better word, I’m labeling this group of saints with a term from modern social media—“influencers”—because of the outsized influence of one saint on another. This influence came through preaching, mentoring, sponsoring, spiritual direction, or tutoring in sanctity, or sometimes in sending another on a mission.

St. Ambrose and St. Augustine (4th century)—it was St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan, whose intelligence and sermons led the brilliant young pagan, Augustine, to open his genius mind to the truths of the Catholic Faith.

St. Gregory the Great/St. Augustine of Canterbury (late 6th century)—Pope St. Gregory the Great, who established Gregorian chant, also sent St. Augustine to England as a missionary.

Bl. Raymond of Capua and St. Catherine of Siena (14th century)—Blessed Raymond was Catherine’s spiritual director for numerous years and helped her discern the mystical revelations and divine mandates she was receiving.

St. Claude de la Colombière and St. Margaret Mary Alocoque (17th century)—St. Claude was the young Jesuit spiritual director of the convent of Visitation Sisters where he helped St. Margaret Mary discern and eventually propagate the apparitions of the Sacred Heart.



Movers and Shakers of Faith

The 12 Apostles with St. Paul and his Companions (1st century, Titus, Silvanus, Timothy, Priscilla and Aquila)—these servants of the grace that flowed from Pentecost hardly need an explanation.

The First Jesuits: (16th century) Sts. Ignatius of Loyola, Francis Xavier, Peter Faber, and Peter Canisius—these founders of the Jesuits launched a much-needed reformation of the Catholic Church at the time of the Protestant Rebellion.

Saints of the New World: (late-16th and 17th centuries) Sts. Rose of Lima, Martin de Porres, John Macias, Toribio de Mongrovejo, and Peter Claver—unbelievably, the first four were *contemporaries in the same diocese* of Lima, Peru, while Claver lived during that same period just north of them in Cartagena, Colombia.

St. Charles Lwanga and the Ugandan Martyrs (19th century)—St. Charles Lwanga was the teacher of most of the 22 Ugandan martyrs, whose horrible deaths planted the seeds of Christianity in that country.



Male-Female Saint Pairs

St. Francis and St. Clare (12th century)—both founders of religious orders.

St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross (16th century)—reforming saints of the Carmelite order.

St. Vincent de Paul and St. Louise de Maurillac (early 17th century)—founders of the Daughters of Charity.

St. Francis de Sales and St. Jane Frances de Chantal (early 17th century)—founders of the Visitation Sisters.

St. John Eudes and St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier (17th and 18th centuries)—both were founders of religious orders, Mary Euphrasia being inspired by the earlier writings of Fr. Eudes.

Odd Couples

St. Agnes and St. Thomas Aquinas (4th and 13th centuries)—the greatest theologian of the Church was deeply devoted to the 12-year-old Roman martyr, Agnes, who died violently in the persecution of Diocletian in 304 AD.

St. Philomena and St. John Vianney (4th and 19th centuries)—the patron saint of all priests was likewise devoted to another young martyr of the early Church, Philomena, whose tomb was discovered in a Roman catacomb in 1802 when Vianney was a teenager.

St. Teresa of Avila and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (16th and 20th centuries)—the first Teresa was a Spanish Carmelite nun; the second Teresa was an atheist German Jewish woman who was converted by reading Avila's autobiography.

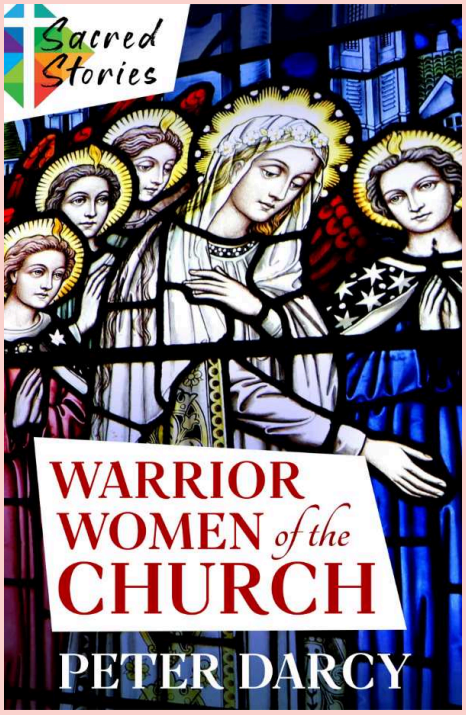


A Category of One

In a category of her own is **St. Joan of Arc** (15th century) whose mentors, and guides for her mission were not actually "of this world." Joan's visions of St. Michael the Archangel himself and two female saints of the ancient church (Sts. Margaret of Antioch and Catherine of Alexandria) led to her deep sanctity and world-changing mission.

Ah! I've ***run out of time and space***, so I am not able to augment this list. But by now, I'm sure you have a clear idea of the meaning of "communion of saints." You probably also knew that I had to end with *my own favorite saint,* Joan of Arc!

Features



Warrior Women of the Church

I'm happy to announce that my newest book, *Warrior Women of the Church,* is now out in **both paperback and e-book versions,** and you can order it through my website (use button below). If you want the Kindle edition e-book, you can get that on Amazon as well.

I'm grateful to those readers who received advanced copies of the book and were kind enough to post reviews on the Amazon page. ***Always appreciated!*** So when Peter Darcy makes it into the big time you can say you helped him in the early stages of his career ha!

Order Book

Wishing you and your family a most wonderful Solemnity of All Saints!

Peter Darcy

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