

The saints, and asking for prayers

Like asking a friend to pray for you.

In short. The Church believes in the communion of saints: the faithful on earth, those being purified, and the blessed in heaven together form one Church.¹ The saints in heaven do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, through the one mediator, Christ Jesus.²

Key points

- God is the God of the living, for all live to him.³
- The communion of saints is the Church.⁴
- The saints intercede for us through Christ, the one mediator.²
- We can and should ask them to intercede for us and for the whole world.⁵

Try this, this week

1. **Read Hebrews 12:1–2.** Notice who the “cloud of witnesses” point us toward.
2. **Read Revelation (Apocalypse) 5:8.** Look for what the elders hold.
3. **Learn about one saint.** Read about their life and what they wrote.
4. **Ask a friend to pray for you this week.** Then pray for them.

“For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live to him.”

Luke 20:38, Douay–Rheims

Watch out: what this does not mean

- Asking a saint to pray for you is not adoration, which is due to God alone.^{9,2}
- The saints do not replace Christ: they intercede through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus.²

Common questions

Isn't contacting the dead forbidden?

Scripture and the Church forbid divination, including conjuring up the dead and recourse to mediums.^{6,7} Asking the saints to pray for us is different: the Catechism teaches that they share in the living tradition of prayer and that we can and should ask them to intercede for us.⁵

How does someone become a canonized saint?

By canonizing some of the faithful, the Church solemnly proclaims that they practiced heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God's grace.⁸ It proposes them as models and intercessors.⁸

Remember: Like asking a friend to pray for you.

Sources

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| 1. CCC 962 | 6. CCC 2116 |
| 2. CCC 956 | 7. Deuteronomy 18:10–11 (Douay–Rheims) |
| 3. Luke 20:38 (Douay–Rheims) | 8. CCC 828 |
| 4. CCC 946 | 9. CCC 2132 |
| 5. CCC 2683 | |

Quotation above: Luke 20:38, Douay–Rheims. Catechism: official text on vatican.va.

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