



Teaching the Saints

A Workbook for
Faith Formation
and Education

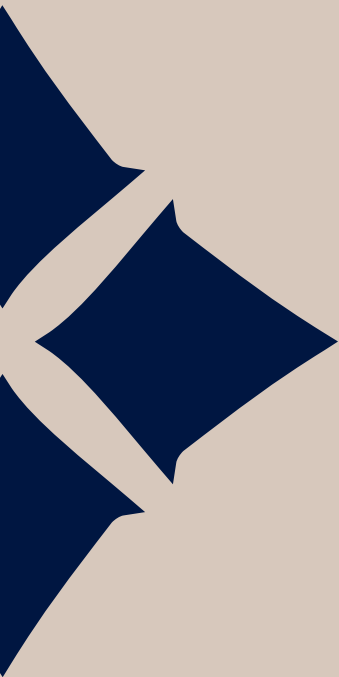
Saints for the month of
OCTOBER



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The saints selected for this month are drawn from the "Witnesses to Holiness" collection from Notre Dame Vision, a high school conference hosted by the McGrath Institute for Church Life at the University of Notre Dame. Notre Dame Vision asks teenagers to consider their God-given talents and how they will use their gifts to respond to God's call for their life. For more information, visit vision.nd.edu.

The illustrations of saints used in this workbook were created by Julie Lonneman, who holds exclusive rights to the further distribution and publication of the art.

How to Use This Workbook

Turn to the witness and intercession of the saints to lead middle school and high school students toward a deeper sense of God's invitation to follow Him. This free teaching resource features the lives of the saints paired with short guided prompts for further reflection, discussion and action.

The worksheets can be used by youth, parents, teachers, religious educators and ministers to celebrate saint feast days during October. Adapt the worksheets for use in the classroom, home or parish to highlight the myriad and unique ways that God calls us to use our gifts to serve the Church and world.

Each worksheet includes the following:

- ◆ A short biography on each saint's life and witness
- ◆ A reflection inviting the student to consider ways each saint resonates with their faith journey
- ◆ A challenge prompting the student to put the saint's witness into action

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

- ◆ 1873-1897; France
- ◆ Feast Day: October 1
- ◆ Patron Saint of Foreign Missions and France



Thérèse, also known as the “Little Flower,” grew up as the youngest child in a family of five daughters. Sadly, Thérèse’s mother died when she was only four years old. Her father moved the family from Alençon to Lisieux, France. Here, Thérèse’s aunt looked after her and her sisters. Thérèse’s religious development was entrusted to her older sisters.

When Thérèse was nine years old, her oldest sister entered the Carmelite convent at Lisieux and set Thérèse to wondering if she would like to do the same thing someday. After a second sister joined the convent, she began to think seriously about her calling to religious life.

At the age of fourteen, Thérèse had a conversion experience on Christmas Eve. The sadness that she had carried with her since her mother’s death left her heart. She later wrote in her

autobiography, “Love filled my heart, I forgot myself, and henceforth I was happy.” Her desire to enter the convent was now stronger than ever, but she was told that she was too young.

When Thérèse refused to give up on her vocation and persisted in her efforts to join the Carmelites, the bishop finally gave her special permission to enter the convent at the age of fifteen. Happily, she joined her sisters and took up life with the Carmelites. Thérèse always wanted to become a missionary, and in 1897, she was invited to join the Carmelites at Hanoi, which is now in Vietnam. She realized she would be unable to attain her dream, however, when she began to hemorrhage from the mouth on Good Friday. She had contracted tuberculosis and died on September 20 of that year.

Thérèse is remembered for the simplicity of her faith and her belief that anyone can praise God through small deeds and quiet prayers. She truly believed that the perfect Christian life is attainable by all people. Her autobiography, *The Story of a Soul*, and other spiritual writings still hold wide appeal. She was named a Doctor of the Church in 1997.

Love proves itself by deeds. I will scatter flowers, perfuming the Divine Throne, and I’ll sweetly sing my hymn of love. These flowers are every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least of actions for love. —St. Thérèse of Lisieux

Reflect

What about St. Thérèse's life stands out to you?

Two of Thérèse's sisters entered the Carmelite convent when Thérèse was a child. Take a moment to put yourself in her shoes. If several of your close family and friends entered religious life, what effect would this have on you? What would you hope for her?

Act

In her autobiography, *A Story of Soul*, Thérèse wrote, "A word, a kindly smile, will often suffice to gladden a wounded and sorrowful heart." Like other great saints, Thérèse knew that the immense love of God could be communicated in simple gestures and actions. Who might be in need of your attention this week? What can you do to simply, but earnestly, reach out?

St. Theodore Guerin

◆ 1798-1856

◆ Feast Day: October 3



Mother Theodore Guerin, made a saint on October 15, 2006, was the first saint canonized from Indiana. Born in France as Anne Thérèse, she received her initial education of Scripture and catechism through the efforts of her mother. At the time, religious education was rare in France due to the suppression of the Catholic church during the French revolution. Her father, a member of the army, was murdered by a group of bandits as he was returning home from war when she was 15 years old.

Anne then took the responsibility of caring for her family and her mother. At age 25, Anne became a nun in the Sisters of Providence, taking the name Sister Theodore. The sisters recognized her leadership, intellect, and religious virtue and sent her to the Diocese of Vincennes, Indiana in 1840 to serve as the superior of a new community. While she was initially unsure of her new mission, she remained open to divine Providence, believing

that all was possible through God. In Indiana, Sister Theodore saw the great need for religious education, particularly for young girls. At the time, there were very few schools in Indiana.

The first school founded by the Sisters of Providence was Saint Mary-of-the-Woods in Terre Haute, Indiana—the first Catholic women’s college in the United States. At the time, most colleges in the country did not admit women. In the next sixteen years, Mother Theodore founded schools throughout Indiana, including Jasper, Vincennes, Montgomery, Madison, Fort Wayne, and Evansville. In addition, she opened pharmacies and hospitals to serve the poor in Indiana.

Mother Theodore was a visionary who recognized the potential for religious education in the mission territory of Indiana. More importantly, she knew that such religious education must not be reserved only for men. By founding the first Catholic college for women, Mother Theodore opened up opportunities for women to receive an education in the liberal arts. Through this training, Mother Theodore and her college in Indiana has inspired countless women to serve the Church and the world.

Loving God, in St. Mother Theodore Guerin you have given us an example of a religious woman who trusted deeply in Providence. Through her intercession, inspire us to dedicate our lives to proclaiming the Gospel through works of love, mercy, and justice. —Opening Prayer of the Feast of Theodore Guerin

Reflect

What about St. Theodore's life stands out to you?

Born Anne Thérèse, Sister Theodore took on the name "Theodore" after an early 4th century Christian soldier and martyr.

When we are confirmed, we take a new name in consideration of a saint whose virtue we desire to emulate. Consider your Confirmation name. Why did you choose this name? How have you taken on this person's charisms so far in your life? If you have not been confirmed, is there a saint whose name you would consider taking? Why?

Act

In the midst of the unknowns in her life, Theodore trusted in the providence of God, which allowed her to bravely respond to the needs of her time. This week, pray the Opening Prayer of the Feast of Theodore Guerin found at the bottom of her biography for all those who may be uncertain in their life path, that they may trust and be open to God's providence.

St. Francis of Assisi

- ◆ 1181-1226; Assisi, Italy
- ◆ Feast Day: October 4
- ◆ Patron Saint of Italy and the Environment



As a young man, Francis sought glory and a life of luxury as a soldier. He paid little attention to the sick and poor of Assisi. One day, as he was preparing to fight, Francis heard a voice that told him to serve the Master instead of other men. He decided to devote his life to God and to focus on prayer and service.

Francis was praying in a run-down church named San Damiano when he heard a call from God to repair the church. Francis took the call literally and stole some cloth from his father to raise money for the repairs. Francis' father, who already disapproved of the change in Francis' lifestyle, was furious. He took him to the bishop's court and demanded money for the stolen cloth. Francis did more than return the money. He stripped his clothes and gave up his possessions and rights to an inheritance.

Francis, wearing the simple cloak of a shepherd, began to move from place to place preaching and gathering followers, later called the Friars Minor.

In 1211, Clare, a young aristocratic woman, heard Francis preaching. She was so struck by his faith and dedication that she decided that she, too, was being called to live a simple life according to the Gospel. In 1212, Francis invited Clare to lead a group of women in a life of poverty and chastity like Francis and his friars. Clare and her followers later became known as the Poor Clares.

In 1224, while Francis was at his retreat on Mount Alvernia, he had a vision of an angel nailed to a cross and received the wounds of Christ. This is the first recorded experience of the stigmata. Francis died two years later at the age of forty-five. Both Francis and Clare were canonized only two years after their deaths. Today, the communities which Francis and Clare started are known as the Franciscans.

What are the servants of God but his singers whose duties it is to lift up the hearts of men and women and move them to spiritual joy? –St. Francis of Assisi

Reflect

What about St. Francis' life stands out to you?

While praying one day in San Damiano Church, Francis heard a voice that said three times, "Francis, go and repair my church which, as you see, is all being destroyed." Imagine you were the one being addressed. If you heard this today, what would you do?

Act

St. Francis praised all of creation and had a special devotion and care for animals. Consider volunteering or lending your support to a local animal shelter either monetarily or through your time. If you have a pet, spend a little extra time with them this week engaging in a favorite activity.



Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman

- ◆ 1801-1890; England
- ◆ Feast Day: October 9

John Henry Newman spent his life listening to his conscience and trying to understand what he was being called to do. When he was 15 years old, he experienced a conversion and felt committed to Christianity and drawn to the clergy. However, as a student at Trinity College, Oxford, John also felt drawn to a life of study. Eventually, he decided to pursue both vocations. He prepared for ordination as a deacon in the Church of England while simultaneously competing for a fellowship at Oxford. John succeeded in both endeavors.

By 1833, John was convinced that the Church of England was in need of reform to return to some of the original elements of the early Church, and so began the Oxford Movement. Having come into contact with Roman Catholicism during a trip to Rome, John included many elements of Catholicism in his writings but was often criticized for doing so. Gradually, he came to believe that Catholicism was genuinely

continuous within the early Church. In 1845, after spending a great deal of time in prayerful contemplation, John answered the call to become Catholic.

Not only did John enter the Catholic Church, but he also studied for the priesthood and was ordained in 1847. He established communities of priests who shared his interest in combining intellectual and pastoral pursuits. He devoted most of his time to prayer and to writing. His writings and thought had a great influence on the Second Vatican Council and on the lives of everyday readers. John's writings call attention to our duty to develop our gifts and follow our vocations. They encourage us to consider the sacredness of everyday life, and they challenge us to act according to our consciences and faith.

Recognizing John Henry Newman's contribution to Catholicism, Pope Leo XIII named him a cardinal in 1879. Over 100 years after his death, Saint John Paul II recognized Newman's lasting impact by declaring him "venerable" in 1991. He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on September 19, 2010.

*Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead thou me on!
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on!
Keep thou my feet! I do not ask to see the distant scene;
one step enough for me.*
—Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman

Reflect

What about Blessed John Henry Cardinal Newman's life stands out to you?

Newman was drawn to Catholicism even before he entered the Catholic Church. Do you know of anyone who has converted to Catholicism? What drew them to the faith? If not, name some things about the faith that you think might compel others to become Catholic.

Act

In his sermon, "Holiness Necessary for Future Blessedness," Newman wrote, "One principal test of our being true servants of God is our wishing to serve Him better." Think of your church or school community. Is there a place or area you may be called to serve? Perhaps ask a teacher or school administrator if there is an area you can commit to this week.



St. John XXIII

- ◆ 1881-1963; Italy
- ◆ Feast Day: October 11

In 1904, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli answered the call to priesthood, a decision that started him on the road to becoming one of the most beloved popes in history.

During World War I, Angelo worked as a hospital orderly and military chaplain. After the war, he was appointed as the national director of the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. Achille Ratti, who would become Pope Pius XI, steered Angelo into a life of travels and diplomacy. He worked in such countries as France, Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey, before and during World War II.

In 1958, Angelo was elected pope and took the name John XXIII. Because he was almost 77 years old, many expected him to continue running things as they were without calling for significant change. In the next few years, Pope John XXIII proved these expectations wrong.

John XXIII saw himself in the role of shepherd. He was committed to Christian unity, social justice, and human rights and tried to reach out to the people. On Christmas, for example, he visited prisoners and the sick. He tried to be visible in Rome by visiting parishes, hospitals, and schools.

On January 25, 1959, John XXIII surprised everyone by calling an ecumenical council—the Second Vatican Council. Unlike many previous councils, this council was called not to correct errors, rather, to bring new life and energy into the Church. He understood the world was changing and that the Church needed to respond to the ways in which the Holy Spirit was working through the “signs of the times.”

On September 23, 1962, John XXIII discovered that he was suffering from stomach cancer. He soon understood that his role was to get the council started, and others would have to direct its course after his death. On June 3, 1963, Pope John XXIII died. The council, placed in the hands of his successor, Paul VI, lasted until 1965 and changed the face of the Church forever. Pope Francis canonized Saint John XXIII on April 27, 2014.

What counts the most in this life is blessed Jesus Christ, his holy Church, his Gospel, truth and goodness. —St. John XXIII

Reflect

What about St. John XXIII's life stands out to you?

John XXIII was involved in diplomacy for much of his career. He worked amidst two world wars and numerous foreign diplomatic assignments among other things.

Imagine you were in John XXIII's place leading the Church caught in the midst of civil, economic, and political unrest. What would you do? What policies would you enact? What kind of witness would you want the Church to provide?

Act

John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council, which increased awareness of the Church's current situation and dialogue among various denominations and faith traditions.

This week, read the first section of John XXIII's encyclical, "Pacem in Terris." What about his observations are still relevant today?

St. Teresa of Ávila

- ◆ 1515–1582; Spain
- ◆ Feast Day: October 15
- ◆ Patron Saint of Spain and Headache and Heart Attack Sufferers



Teresa grew up in Spain and loved learning about Jesus and the saints. When she was seven years old, Teresa and her brother Rodrigo left home for the country of the Moors in the hopes of becoming martyrs. Their plan failed when they ran into their uncle, who brought them back home to their upset mother. From then on, they stayed close to home and tried to build stone hermitages in the garden. These never turned out very well, but Teresa still strove for a life of quiet and solitude.

After her mother died, Teresa fell ill, possibly from grief. She decided to enter a Carmelite monastery, where she was able to recover. After she took her vows, she succumbed to a second, extremely painful illness. She underwent a difficult recovery period and spent the next twenty years trying to live a life of prayer and fidelity to God. She often found it difficult to pray, though, and knew that something was missing.

In 1554, Teresa was praying in front of a statue of Christ when she experienced a conversion. Many mystical experiences then followed, but she was often ridiculed when she shared them with others.

In 1562, Teresa decided to initiate a reformation of her order. In an effort to return to the original Carmelite way of life, she started her own order, the Discalced Carmelites (“Discalced” means “without shoes”—the sisters wore only sandals). The sisters lived lives of poverty, engaged in manual labor, abstained from meat, and lived in solitude.

Teresa is well known for her great spiritual writings, which included *The Way of Life* and *The Interior Castle*. In 1970, the Catholic Church recognized her important contributions to Christian spirituality and named her a Doctor of the Church.

Teresa died on October 4, 1582. Those who witnessed her death claimed to smell a beautiful scent coming from her body. When her grave was later ordered by one of her confessors to be opened, her body supposedly smelled of lilies. Today, Teresa’s spiritual writings are still widely read. We admire her ability to combine contemplation and action in her life.

Let there be nothing which we know would further our Lord’s service that we dare not undertake with the assistance of his grace. —St. Teresa of Ávila

Reflect

What about St. Teresa's life stands out to you?

In her book *The Interior Castle*, Teresa writes, "...you must not build upon foundations of prayer and contemplation alone, for, unless you strive after the virtues and practice them, you will never grow to be more than dwarfs." What do you think she means? What is she saying about our life of faith?

Act

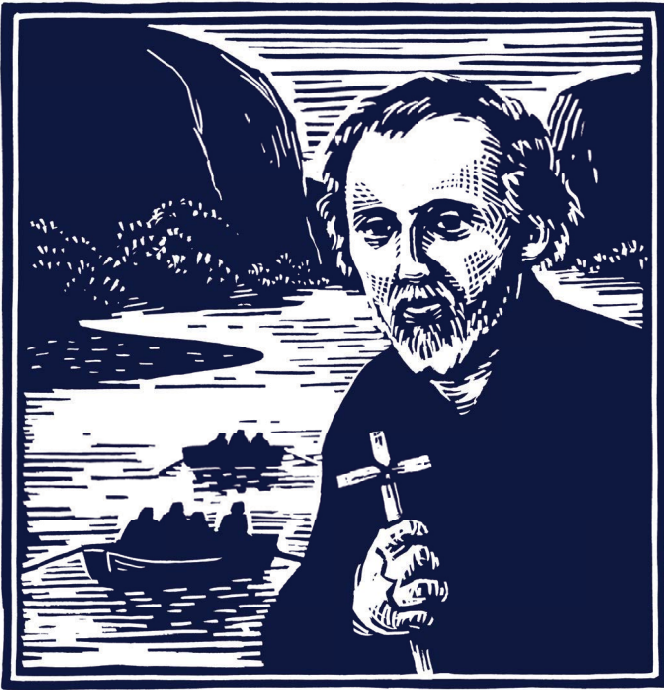
St. Teresa placed her trust in Jesus, even and especially when afflicted and in pain. If you find yourself overwhelmed this week, take a few minutes to share your worries and concerns with God. Then, end with Teresa's poem below, *In the Hands of God*:

"Give me, if you will, prayers;/ Or let me know dryness,
An abundance of devotion,/ Or if not, then barrenness.
In you alone, Sovereign Majesty, I find my peace,
What do you want of me?
Yours I am, for you I was born:
What do you want of me?"

St. Isaac Jogues and the North American Martyrs

◆ 1607-1646

◆ Feast Day: October 19



Saint Isaac Jogues and his companions were some of the first missionaries to the native peoples of North America. During Isaac's first trip to North America, he lived in constant danger of capture and torture by the natives.

Amidst the cruelest possible conditions, Isaac experienced happiness greater than any riches could afford and considered himself one of the most blessed people on earth. In a letter to his mother about a year after he left France, he wrote the following: "[Providence] has granted me the grace of the greatest happiness and peace, a thousand times over...a greater happiness than if I had in my possession all the riches in the world. ...We have baptized about two hundred and forty of [the natives] this year. Among these are some whom I have washed in the waters of baptism, and who are assuredly in Paradise, since some of them were small babies of one or two years of age."

In the sixth year of his missionary work, Isaac was captured by the natives, brutally tortured, and enslaved for 13 months. He escaped and returned to France where he was received with great honor and called a living martyr by the Pope. Isaac chose to return to North America for a second encounter with the Iroquois. He was accompanied by the French military to negotiate a peace treaty with the natives. Immediately after this diplomatic mission was completed, Jogues begged his superiors to send him back. When he returned to the Iroquois out of concern for their salvation, he was captured and killed.

Jogues was prepared for this end. Shortly before his death, he wrote to a Jesuit friend the following: "I shall be happy if our Lord will complete the sacrifice where He has begun it, and make the little blood I have shed in that land the earnest of what I would give from every vein of my body and my heart. In a word, this people is 'a bloody spouse' to me (Exodus 4:25)." Isaac loved the Iroquois people and joined Jesus in sacrificing himself for their eternal glory.

O God, who chose to manifest the blessed hope of your eternal Kingdom by the toil of Saint Isaac Jogues and companions and by the shedding of their blood, graciously grant that through their intercession the faith of Christians may be strengthened day by day. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

—Opening Prayer of the Feast of Isaac Jogues and the North American Martyrs

Reflect

What about the lives of St. Isaac Jogues and the North American martyrs stand out to you?

What do you think gave Isaac Jogues the strength to make three separate journeys to minister amongst the Iroquois people? What would you have done?

Act

Like Isaac Jogues, many people engage in dangerous work at the service of spreading the Gospel. Take a moment this week to pray for those who labor in dangerous conditions.

St. John Paul II

- ◆ 1920-2005; Poland
- ◆ Feast Day: October 22



Karol Jozef Wojtyla was born in 1920 in a small Polish town 50 kilometers from Krakow. After graduating high school, Karol pursued his love of theatre, enrolling in Jagiellonian University in Krakow and in a school for drama. The drama school was closed a year later by Nazi forces and Karol made his living in a chemical factory.

In 1942, Karol began studying for the priesthood and in 1946, at age 26, was ordained a priest by the Archbishop of Krakow. Almost immediately following his ordination, he was sent to Rome to complete a doctorate in Theology. When he returned to Poland, he studied philosophy and became a college professor and university chaplain. His work as chaplain during these years harbored his love for the youth of the church.

Karol was ordained a bishop in 1958 and made a cardinal just nine years later. On October 16, 1978 he was elected the 263rd successor to St. Peter.

He took the name John Paul II and served as the Bishop of Rome for 27 years, one of the longest pontificates in Church history.

John Paul II's pontificate was marked primarily by his missionary spirit and charism of renewal for the worldwide church. John Paul II traveled more than any of his predecessors visiting 125 countries and ministering to large crowds of pilgrims wherever he went. With a particular love for young people, he instituted and led nineteen World Youth Days across the globe. He promoted spiritual rebirth in the Church by naming the Year of Redemption, the Marian Year, and the Year of the Eucharist and sought to offer the church models of modern piety by beatifying 1,338 individuals and canonizing 482 saints. John Paul II published an extensive collection of Encyclicals, Exhortations, Apostolic Letters, and Apostolic Constitutions along with five full length books.

On April 2, 2005, in the Octave of Easter, John Paul II died leaving a legacy of hope and renewal in the church. On April 28, 2005, his successor, Benedict XVI, waived the five-year waiting period before opening the cause for canonization. Pope Francis canonized Saint John Paul II on April 27, 2014.

Young people who are listening to me, young people who, more than anything else, want to know what you must do to gain eternal life, always say yes to God and he will fill you with his happiness. —St. John Paul II

Reflect

What about St. John Paul II's life stands out to you?

John Paul II believed strongly in the capability of youth to serve the Church and live the Gospel. Among other things, he instituted the celebration of World Youth Days that brought young people together from across the world to encourage them in their faith.

The tradition of World Youth Day continues every few years. What do you think Catholic youth most need to hear in order to be encouraged and supported in living out their faith?

Act

St. John Paul II had special devotions to the Eucharist and the Blessed Virgin Mary. He spent at least one Holy Hour in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament every day. He entrusted himself to Mary after his mother's death when he was nine and constantly prayed to Mary for her help and protection throughout his papacy. Spend some time with the Lord in adoration or go to Mass sometime this week.



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