



Teaching the Saints

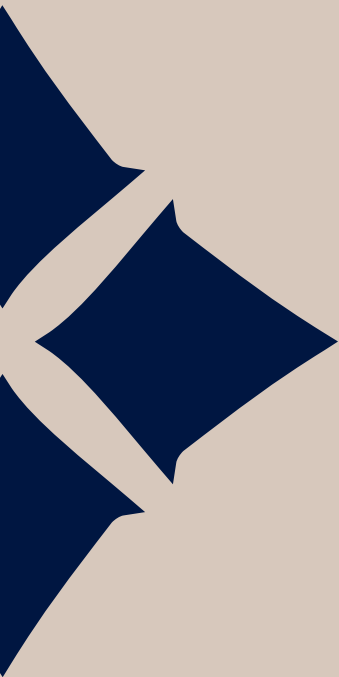
A Workbook for
Faith Formation
and Education

Saints for the month of
MAY

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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 May. 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. Damien of Molokai

- ◆ 1840-1889; Hawaii
- ◆ Feast Day: May 10
- ◆ Patron Saint of Hawaii and Those with Leprosy

Through his great love of God and the people of Molokai, he brought respect and dignity to those who were rejected by society, transforming their lives with hard work, compassion, and spiritual fervor.

After sixteen years among them, Damien contracted leprosy and was shunned by many church leaders and the government. He died from the disease in 1889. He is considered a “martyr of charity” for his total dedication in life and in death to this community of outcasts.

Father Damien was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI alongside Marianne Cope, a missionary who cared for the dying Father Damien and took over his work following his death. They are both celebrated as heroes in Hawaii on April 15, the anniversary of Father Damien’s death.

Damien De Veuster was a young brother in the Congregation of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary in Belgium who longed to be a missionary, but was thought unfit to become a priest. When his true brother, also a member of the order, was unable to be sent on a mission to Hawaii because of illness, Damien volunteered and was sent there in 1864. He was soon ordained a priest.

The island of Molokai had become a site of quarantine for victims of leprosy in Hawaii, and Father Damien offered to live and work among them since they had no priest. In 1873, the bishop sent him to minister to this community, and Father Damien worked tirelessly to bring order and peace. He built churches, homes, and schools, dug graves and established law and education among the lepers.

God of compassion, we bless your Name for the ministries of Damien and Marianne, who ministered to the lepers abandoned on Molokai in the Hawaiian Islands. Help us, following their examples, to be bold and loving in confronting the incurable plagues of our time, that your people may live in health and hope. —Opening Prayer of the Feast of Damien and Marianne

Reflect

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

From a very early age, Damien longed to be a missionary. Take a moment to put yourself in his shoes and imagine you were called to serve in that way. What kind of skills or attributes do you think would be required? What would be easy for you? What would be difficult?

Act

Damien would have been aware of the risk he was taking to minister to the people of Molokai. He went above and beyond in his ministry to them and worked tirelessly to restore their God-given dignity.

Think of a way you can go above and beyond for someone else this week. What parts of your daily routine could benefit from some extra effort? Who do you encounter regularly that you could give special words of gratitude, an affirmation or an act of service?



Blessed Franz Jägerstätter

- ◆ 1907-1943; Austria
- ◆ Feast Day: May 21

Franz Jägerstätter was born in Austria on May 20, 1907 into a poor but loving family. Franz focused his life on being a good husband and father to his three daughters. He was not interested in politics, yet he couldn't remain neutral when Hitler's armies entered Austria in 1938. At the time, many Catholics in Austria supported Hitler, believing he would wipe out communism. Franz felt uncomfortable about followers of Jesus using machine guns and bombs, and he wondered whether obedience to Hitler was compatible with obedience to God.

One night Franz had a dream of a beautiful train. The conductor shouted, "All aboard," and people rushed to obey the conductor by getting on the train. Then Franz heard a voice in the dream warning him not to board the train. The dream instantly changed to a vision of people suffering and dying. He woke up terrified, realizing the dream was about the war that the Nazis were

waging and the suffering and death it would cause. When Franz was required to report for military duty, he refused to join the army. His appeal to work in a hospital was not accepted, and he was soon arrested for refusing to fight.

Franz's family and friends pleaded with him, "Join the army for the sake of your wife and children." Yet Franz knew that he could not disobey his conscience, even for his wife and daughters. He asked: "Is an action any better because one is married and has children? Is it better or worse because thousands of other Catholics are doing the same?" He hoped his decision not to fight would encourage others to resist war. He pleaded to others to follow his example: "I would like to call out to everyone who is riding in this train: Jump out before this train reaches its destination, even if it costs you your life."

Toward the end of his life, Franz echoed the words of Jesus saying, "Let us love our enemies, bless those who curse us, pray for those who persecute us...happy are those who live and die in God's love." On August 9, 1943, Franz was executed by guillotine for refusing to fight in Hitler's army.

There have always been heroes and martyrs who gave their lives for Christ and their faith. If we hope to reach our goal someday, then we, too, must become heroes of the faith. —Blessed Franz Jägerstätter

Reflect

What about Blessed Franz's life stands out to you?

Imagine yourself in Franz's position, caught between obeying Hitler's orders to fight or being separated from your family. What do you think you would have done?

Act

Franz's family inspired him to go deeper into his faith, especially the stories of the Bible and the lives of the saints. Take a moment to look back over the lives of the saints who have been important to your spiritual journey. How have their lives inspired you to use your gifts in service to the world? Take a moment to recommit to a practice or act of service that you may have neglected in recent weeks.



St. Joan of Arc

- ◆ 1412-1431; France
- ◆ Feast Day: May 30
- ◆ Patron Saint of France and Military Personnel

Joan of Arc, a peasant girl, grew up in a dangerous time of conflict between France and England. At the age of thirteen, she began to hear the voices of saints. She was virtually ignored until she began to predict the defeats of France.

She soon began to gain the attention of the Dauphin, who would later become Charles VII of France. After careful questioning by Charles and by theologians, her legitimacy was established. With Charles' permission, Joan led troops to Orléans and broke the English siege. After more victories, Joan's fame spread. When Charles was crowned king of France, Joan stood at his side.

Joan soon found herself in great danger. When she was captured by the Burgundians and sold to the English, Charles betrayed her and did nothing to save her. Looking for an excuse to execute

her, the English charged her with witchcraft and sorcery. The bishop of Beauvais led the interrogation, and Joan, with little education and certainly no theological training, found it difficult to defend herself. At one point, she began to take back things she had said. Drawing on her faith, she returned to her original claim that God had sent the voices to her and had set her on a mission. This hesitation, however, was used against her.

Joan was condemned as a lapsed heretic and was burned at the stake on May 30, 1431. As she died, she called out to Jesus.

Over twenty years later, Joan's family requested that the Pope reopen the case. A papal commission determined that Joan was wrongfully condemned and proclaimed her innocence. She was canonized in 1930.

We remember Joan of Arc for her courage and her faith in God.

I fear nothing for God IS with me! –St. Joan of Arc

Reflect

What about St. Joan of Arc's life stands out to you?

Joan courageously proclaimed the truth even as she was falsely accused of crimes she didn't commit.

Each year, people throughout the United States and across the world are falsely accused and held accountable for crimes they did not commit. How might we better work to prevent false accusations and convictions? What might be required?

Act

Take a moment this week to learn about organizations such as The Innocence Project that work to support those who are falsely accused and convicted. Take a moment to pray for all those who are innocent while imprisoned.



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