



Teaching the **Saints**

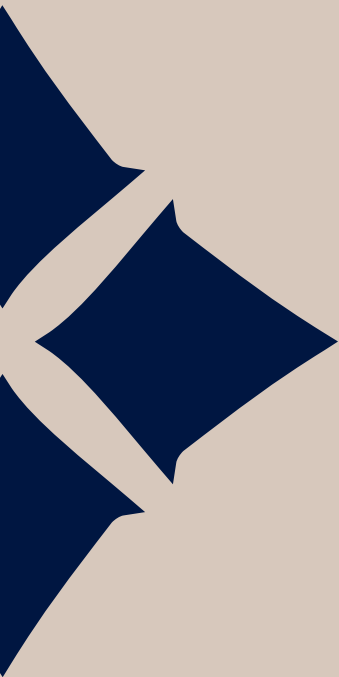
A Workbook for
Faith Formation
and Education

Saints for the month of
JUNE

McGRATH INSTITUTE FOR CHURCH LIFE



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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 June. 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. Charles Lwanga and Companions

- ◆ ca. 1860–1886; Uganda
- ◆ Feast Day: June 3



In the 1880s, Christianity had begun to spread through the work of missionaries into the Ugandan kingdom of Buganda. Many of the pages—or young male servants—in the court of King Mwanga were becoming followers of this new religion. Mwanga, known for his terrible treatment of the pages, saw Christianity as a threat to his authority. When the Catholic head of the pages, Joseph Mukasa, criticized the king's behavior and tried to protect the pages, Mwanga ordered him to be beheaded.

Charles Lwanga became the new head of the pages and continued to protect them and teach them the ways of Christianity. Unwilling to accept Christianity and the actions of Lwanga in his court, King Mwanga ordered the Christian pages to give up their faith or die. The pages spoke up loudly and professed their faith in front of

the king. They were then forced on a sixteen-mile march to Namugongo, the place of their execution. As the leader of the pages, Charles Lwanga was one of the first men to be burned to death. Throughout the ordeal, the young men, all between the ages of 13 and 25, remained courageous and even joyful. In total, 22 African Catholics and 24 Protestants were martyred.

After the pages' deaths, Christianity secretly survived in the court of King Mwanga. After King Mwanga's death, missionary priests who had been expelled now returned. By 1890, it is estimated that there were as many as 10,000 Christians in the kingdom of Buganda.

A well that has many sources never runs dry. When we are gone, others will come after us. —One of the Ugandan Martyrs

Reflect

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

Bugandan King Mwanga ordered that Charles and his young pages be killed for refusing to give up their Christian faith. How would you respond if posed with the king's ultimatum: deny Christ and save your life and the life of your people, or affirm Christ and die an inhuman death?

Act

Charles and the other pages refused to renounce their faith even knowing the suffering and death they might experience at the hands of the king. Because of their witness and martyrdom, the Christian community in Buganda continued to share their faith secretly and grow in number.

Ask your parents or teacher if you can watch the movie, "Of God's and Men." What elements of the movie recall Charles' choice? If you can't watch the movie, write down any moments when you have not stood up for your faith.

St. Aloysius Gonzaga

- ◆ 1568-1591; Italy
- ◆ Feast Day: June 21
- ◆ Patron Saint of Youth



Aloysius was born to a powerful, aristocratic Italian family among great violence and frivolity during the Italian Renaissance. He was a rebel in his wealthy and military family, wanting a life of radical charity. As a child, Aloysius contracted a kidney disease that kept him confined to bed, but he spent his time reading the lives of the saints and praying. He met the great Saint Charles Borromeo at age 12, and it was from him that Aloysius received his first Holy Communion.

After reading about the Jesuit missionaries in India, Aloysius decided to become a missionary himself. He began practicing by teaching catechism classes to young boys in the summers. Aloysius' father greatly opposed his son's desire to become a Jesuit in part because it would cut Aloysius off from his inheritance. His father also wanted to see his military lineage carried on in his son. The boy persisted and won his father over

at age 17 when he entered the Jesuit novitiate. He was ordained a deacon at age 20 but never became a priest. In 1590, he received a vision from the Archangel Gabriel that he would die within a year.

In 1591, an outbreak of the plague occurred in Rome and the Jesuits opened a hospital to care for the victims. Aloysius volunteered to work there, but his order was concerned about his poor health. They allowed him to work in a ward without victims of the plague, but one man in the ward had already contracted the disease. Aloysius had another vision, and told his confessor, Saint Robert Bellarmine, that he would die on the feast of Corpus Christi. On that day, which fell on June 21 that year, he seemed very well in the morning, but insisted that he would die before the day was over. As he began to grow weak, Bellarmine administered last rites and recited the prayers for the dying. Aloysius died just before midnight. He was 23 years old, and it is said that he died with the name of Jesus on his lips.

Aloysius, known for his purity and strong interior life, was canonized by Pope Benedict XIII in 1726.

Father, you called Aloysius from a life of riches, comfort and power to be poor as Jesus was poor. As Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead, Aloysius cared for the sick and dying. Give me courage to seek you in the poor and the abandoned, in those who have no place and no status in this world. —From the Jesuit Prayer Card to St. Aloysius

Reflect

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

If you were given one year left to live at the young age of 22, what would you do? How would you change your perspective and your habits?

Act

Aloysius died on the Feast of Corpus Christi, instituted over 300 years earlier to commemorate the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. St. Thomas Aquinas composed hymns honoring the Holy Eucharist including "Pange Lingua," "Panis Angelicus," "O Salutaris Hostia," and "Tantum Ergo." They are still sung on Corpus Christi and throughout the liturgical year. Search for one of these hymns and listen to it this week. Meditate on its words.

St. Thomas More

- ◆ 1477-1535; England
- ◆ Feast Day: June 22
- ◆ Patron Saint of Lawyers, Politicians and Adopted Children



Thomas began his career as a member of Parliament during the rule of England's King Henry VIII. While he worked in Parliament, he often thought about entering a monastery or the priesthood and struggled in the discernment of God's call in his life. In the end, he chose the vocation of marriage and a life of politics and law.

Thomas led a busy life both inside and outside the home. At home, his family's days always included prayer and Scripture reading. Guests frequently stopped by for a visit, including the king himself. In 1529, Henry VIII appointed Thomas as the Lord Chancellor. Although this position meant many hours of work for Thomas, he continued his religious traditions with his family and always spent Fridays in prayer. He also wrote and spoke in favor of moral and social reform. His most famous work is *Utopia*, written in 1516.

Thomas' new position put him in a difficult spot when Henry's actions came under the scrutiny of Pope Clement VII. After Catherine of Aragon could not bear Henry a son, Henry divorced her and married Anne Boleyn. The Church, however, declared his marriage to Catherine still valid and refused to recognize his marriage to Anne Boleyn.

When Henry was named "Protector and Supreme Head of the Church of England," Thomas recognized that Henry was breaking ties with Rome and he resigned his chancellorship. He also refused to attend the coronation ceremony of Anne Boleyn. When he refused to take an oath that acknowledged Henry's first marriage as null and his second marriage as valid, Thomas was thrown into the Tower of London.

While in jail, he wrote spiritual works and letters to his daughter. In 1534, Henry VIII began to order the execution of traitors who would not take the oath. Thomas was beheaded on May 22, 1535. Thomas died proclaiming that he was "the king's good servant, but God's first." We remember Thomas for the way in which he balanced a busy work life with his prayer life and for his courage to stand up for his convictions.

Nothing can come but what God allows. And I am very sure that whatever that be, however bad it might seem, it shall indeed be the best.

—St. Thomas More, in a letter from prison to his daughter, Meg

Reflect

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

Would you stand up to the king in defense of marriage like Thomas did? What obstacles might hold you back?

Act

For a movie night this week, propose "A Man for All Seasons" which is based on the life of St. Thomas More. If you don't have access to the movie, think about a difficult decision you have faced recently and talk with a friend, family member, or mentor about how you came to the decision and the results of it.

St. John the Baptist

- ◆ First Century
- ◆ Feast Day: June 24
- ◆ Patron Saint of Jordan, Monks and Highways



Elizabeth and Zechariah had thought that they would never have children when the angel Gabriel announced that Elizabeth would bear a son, and his name would be John. In his disbelief, Zechariah was struck mute and could not say a word until eight days after his son's birth when it was time to name him. Zechariah announced that his son would be named John and prophesied the importance John's life would have. He said:

"And you, my child, will be called prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins..." (Lk 1:76-77).

John lived an ascetic lifestyle in the desert until his thirtieth year when he actively began his ministry. John preached repentance and prepared the way for Jesus. John could have gained great

popularity and fame on his own, but he always preached that someone greater was coming. When Jesus asked John to baptize him, John did not feel worthy of this honor; Jesus convinced him otherwise.

As Jesus began his own ministry, John found himself in trouble with King Herod. John had not supported Herod's decision to marry Herodias, Herod's half-brother's wife. Out of fear that John could spread discontent and rebellious behavior among the people, Herod had John imprisoned.

At one of Herod's parties, Herodias' daughter danced for him with such skill that Herod promised her anything she wanted. At her mother's request, her daughter asked for the head of John the Baptist. Bound by his promise, Herod ordered that John be beheaded in prison.

Jesus had praised the work and ministry of John. He told crowds that among those born of women, there was no one greater. Upon hearing the news of John's death, Jesus was deeply saddened. The one who had prepared the way for him had died. The world had lost a great prophet and preacher.

I am baptizing you with water, for repentance, but the one who is coming after me is mightier than I. I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. —St. John the Baptist, Matthew 3:11

Reflect

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

King Herod was so delighted with Herodias' dance that he promised he would grant whatever wish she wanted. How, if at all, does Herod's decision to grant Herodias' wish shed light on Pontius Pilate's decision to acquiesce to the crowd's calls to crucify Jesus?

Act

John admitted, "I am not the Christ" (John 1:20). Rather, he stood as a witness to Christ, granting all authority and glory to the Son of God.

After we ace a test, make a key play in a game, or have a stellar musical performance, it's easy to convince ourselves of our own greatness or merit. The next time someone pats you on the back this week, take up John's posture. Thank the person for their compliment, and give God thanks for the opportunity to serve him.

St. Peter and St. Paul

- ◆ First Century
- ◆ Feast Day: June 29



Peter was the first disciple called by Jesus and acted as the leader of the 12 apostles. Before being called to discipleship, Peter was a fisherman named Simon. When Jesus met Peter, he gave him his new name, which means “rock” and told him that he would now be a “fisher of men.” Throughout Jesus’ ministry, Peter was one of the three disciples who were closest to Jesus along with James and John.

Peter was far from perfect. When he was called by Jesus to walk out onto the water, Peter was overwhelmed with doubt and could not do it. After Jesus’ arrest, Peter denied knowing him three times. Peter wept after his act of betrayal.

After Jesus’ death, Peter became a strong defender of the gospel and worked to grow the Christian community. He also welcomed Gentiles into the community, an important decision in the development of Christianity. Evidence suggests

that Peter eventually traveled to Rome where he was crucified upside down since he was unwilling to die in the same way that Christ had died. St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican is believed to have been built upon Peter’s grave. Catholics trace the papal office to Peter and recognize him as the first Bishop of Rome.

Paul was equally instrumental in the development and spread of Christianity, but he began his ministry in a very different way. Paul, originally named Saul, persecuted Christians. One day while on the road to Damascus, Paul had a conversion experience and was called by the Risen Christ to spread the gospel. He paid special attention to the Gentiles and worked with Peter to bring them into the church. Paul went on at least three major missionary journeys throughout the Mediterranean world, and the letters he wrote during this time make up a major portion of the Christian Scriptures.

Like Peter, Paul died in Rome as a martyr. He was probably beheaded around the year 65 during the persecution by Nero. Christians today owe a great deal to the courage and perseverance of Peter and Paul.

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. –Corinthians 13: 4-7

Reflect

What about St. Peter and St. Paul's lives stand out to you?

Jesus changed Saul's name to Paul, meaning "little" or "small." He changed Simon's to Peter, meaning "rock." What new name could you see Jesus choosing for you? How could you live out the fullness of that name?

Act

Jesus made Peter the first pope of the Catholic Church when he proclaimed, "You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my Church." (Matthew 16:18) What can you do this week to build up the church? Think about volunteering at your parish.



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