



# *Teaching the* **Saints**

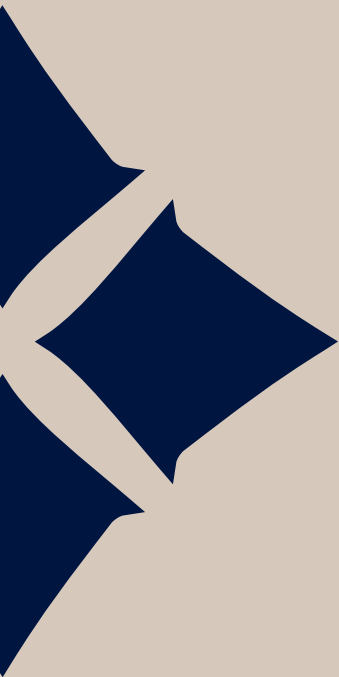
A Workbook for  
Faith Formation  
and Education

Saints for the month of  
**JULY**

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](http://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*

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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 July. 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



## Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

- ◆ 1901-1925
- ◆ Feast Day: July 4

Blessed Pier was born in Turin, Italy in 1901 into an influential, rich family. His father was a political journalist and activist, who eventually served as ambassador to Germany during World War I. His mother was a popular Italian painter. The earliest portion of his education took place at home with his sister, Luciana. Pier was also interested in athletics, mountain climbing and skiing; he also had a deep love for music. Most importantly, Pier loved his faith.

From his father, Pier inherited a passion for justice. Unlike his father, who was an agnostic, Pier grounded his works of justice in the Beatitudes. In college, he studied engineering and mineralogy so that he could serve the needs of the miners, who were treated quite poorly. He would give away his money to the poor, and walk home instead of taking the train. He participated in demonstrations in Italy against fascism, a form of government that valued the state over the

needs of individuals and society. Pier believed this disrespect for the human person was at the root of World War I. In caring for the poor and his activism, he found nourishment in the contemplation of the Blessed Sacrament and prayer, becoming Dominican tertiary.

In June 1925, Pier was diagnosed with polio. He contracted the disease through his frequent visits with the poor, something that he had never mentioned to his family. He died a month later at age 24. Thousands gathered at his funeral. While his father expected a large number of people at the funeral, he was surprised to see the many poor and needy present. The poor were surprised to learn that this gentle, humble, and loving man was such a well-known member of society.

Blessed Pier is an important model of faith for all of us as we continue to discern our vocations. As a layman in the Church, he lived out the radical call of his baptism through the deep love that he held for each human being he met. Pier approached his entire life, whether playing sports, attending the opera, or caring for the poor, as a gift from God.

*Every one of you knows that the foundation of our religion is charity. Without it all our religion would crumble, because we would not really be Catholic as long as we did not carry out or rather shape our whole lives by the two commandments in which the essence of the Catholic faith lies: to love God with all our strength and to love our neighbor as ourselves. —Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati*

# *Reflect*

What about Blessed Pier Giorgio's life stands out to you?

Pier Giorgio served among miners who were subject to poor working conditions and low pay so that he could "serve Christ better." Think about a time when you did something to be close to the poor and marginalized. What was the outcome? What did you learn?

# *Act*

Pier Giorgio did all things in life "to the heights," operating with firm conviction and resolve to live the truths of the Gospel. For example, in order to ensure he awoke early enough to hike to a nearby Marian shrine and pray, Pier Giorgio had the family gardener tug a rope tied to a table in Pier Giorgio's bedroom to shake him up.

Think of one way you can live with more conviction this week. What is one aspect of your daily routine that you could improve? You may consider waking up on your first alarm, using the stairs instead of the elevator or donating a piece of clothing to someone who needs it more than you.

# St. Maria Goretti

- ◆ 1890-1902
- ◆ Feast Day: July 6
- ◆ Patron Saint of Young People, Girls, and Rape Victims



St. Maria Goretti was born into a poor family in Italy and never learned to read or write. Several months after receiving her first communion at age 12, an eighteen year-old who worked for her father named Alessandro seized Maria. He took her into a bedroom and attempted to rape her.

Maria resisted, reminding Alessandro that raping her would be a sin for him. Alessandro responded by stabbing Maria fourteen times. She was taken to the hospital where she survived for twenty-four hours. Before dying, she forgave Alessandro, comforted her family, and received the Eucharist for the last time.

Maria's story did not end with her death. Alessandro was sentenced to 30 years in prison. During the early part of his sentence, he remained unrepentant for his horrific crime. One evening while sleeping, Alessandro dreamed that Maria came to him, offering him flowers and

her forgiveness. At this moment, Alessandro repented. Twenty-seven years after the crime, Alessandro was released from prison and asked Maria's mother for forgiveness.

Maria's story quickly spread and devotion to her spread. Maria was canonized less than 50 years later. Maria's family, including her mother, as well as Alessandro, were present for her canonization. This marked the first time that a saint's mother was present for her child's canonization.

In the calendar of saints, Maria is listed as a martyr, or one who died for her faith. But, the word martyr also means "witness." Maria is an important model of faith because she witnessed to the power of Christian forgiveness. By forgiving her attacker, she showed that Christian forgiveness extends to the most hideous of crimes. Such forgiveness is by no means easy. But when it is offered in a spirit of Christian love, it has the ability to transform not only the life of the one who is forgiven, but the entire world. In her act of forgiveness, Maria became an image of Christ for the entire world.

*Father, source of innocence and lover of chastity, You gave St. Maria Goretti the privilege of offering her life in witness to Christ. As you gave her the crown of martyrdom, let her prayers keep us faithful to your teaching.*

*—Opening Prayer of the Feast of Maria Goretti*

# *Reflect*

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

Maria stood up for her faith and fought to keep Alessandro from committing sin. Nevertheless, he persisted and fatally injured her. Have you ever felt like someone hurt you with their words or actions because of your beliefs? Have you ever acted uncharitably to someone who was defending their faith?

# *Act*

Just as Maria forgave her attacker, how can you be a steward of forgiveness this week? Where can you ask for forgiveness? Who can you forgive?



## St. Augustine Zhao Rong and the Chinese Martyrs

- ◆ 1648-1930
- ◆ Feast Day: July 9
- ◆ Patron Saint of Catechists and Missionaries

Christianity came to China through the work of Syrian missionaries in the 5th century during a period of Christian persecution. Many Christians, who feared being killed for practicing their faith, were forced into secrecy and hiding. Augustine Zhao Rong and 119 more Chinese martyrs were killed for proclaiming the Gospel and refusing to renounce faith in Jesus Christ.

Killed between 1648 and 1930, the Chinese martyrs span ages 9 to 79 and represent various countries of origin and Christian vocations. Thirty-three of the martyrs were European missionaries from France, Italy, Spain, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The majority of the European missionaries were priests and religious. Eighty-seven of the martyrs were born in China and include lay women and men, priests, seminarians, catechists, and catechumens.

Augustine Zhao Rong was the first martyr native to China. He joined the Chinese military at age 20 where he witnessed the persecution of Christians. He was struck by the charity, prayerfulness, and teaching of a priest named Fr. Martin Moye who was imprisoned for his faith. When Fr. Martin was released from prison, Zhao Rong accompanied him and asked to be accepted as a catechumen. He was baptized on the feast of St. Augustine at age 30, taking Augustine as his patron saint and baptismal name. He was ordained to the priesthood at age 35 and martyred in 1815.

Chi Zhuzi was another martyr who was preparing for baptism at age 18. Before he was tortured and killed for refusing to deny his faith, Chi Zhuzi boldly proclaimed, "Every piece of my flesh, every drop of my blood will tell you that I am a Christian." A young woman named Ann Wang was 14 years old when she was martyred. Ann remained faithful in the face of her impending death, and just before she was beheaded she proclaimed, "The door of heaven is open to all," and repeated the name of Jesus three times.

Pope John Paul II canonized Augustine Zhao Rong and the 119 Chinese martyrs as a group on October 1, 2000.

*All-powerful, ever-living God, turn our weakness into strength. As you gave Augustine Zhao Rong and the martyrs of China the courage to suffer death for Christ, give us the courage to live in faithful witness to you. —Opening Prayer of the Feast of Augustine Zhao Rong and the Chinese Martyrs*



## *Reflect*

What about the lives of St. Augustine and the martyrs stand out to you?

The martyrs traveled from many different countries to bring Christianity to China. What would be difficult about being a missionary in a country and culture different from your own? How would you respond to these difficulties?

## *Act*

Take a moment this week to call to mind those who are persecuted for their faith. Pray especially that there will be a greater openness to Christianity in East Asian countries, with the help of missionaries and natives who courageously spread the Gospel there.



## St. Benedict

- ◆ 480-587
- ◆ Feast Day: July 11
- ◆ Patron Saint of Schoolchildren

where every guest had his or her feet washed. This washing of the feet was most important when the poor came to visit because the Rule teaches that in receiving the poor, we greet Christ himself.

Scholastica taught Benedict the most important lesson about the Christian life. Once a year, Benedict and Scholastica would meet and talk about God for hours. During one visit, Benedict was preparing to leave, but Scholastica begged him to stay. Benedict's Rule did not allow him to spend a night away from the monastery so Scholastica prayed that God might allow Benedict to stay for the evening. Suddenly, a huge rainstorm required Benedict to remain in the shelter with his sister. Scholastica died three days later. While Benedict had at first been annoyed by his sister's prayer, he eventually came to see that the greatest work that he could do was to give each person his full attention. Through their relationship as brother and sister, Benedict and Scholastica have taught the Church that the first vocation of the Christian is the love of God and neighbor.

St. Benedict, the twin brother of St. Scholastica, was born in a small village northeast of Rome. Benedict was sent to Rome to receive an education in classical studies but quickly fled to become a hermit. After several years living the monastic life, other monks wanted Benedict to serve as their spiritual father in a community. Finding Benedict's way of monastic life too strict, they tried to poison him with tainted wine. Benedict blessed the glass of wine and it shattered into pieces. He left this group of monks, eventually founding twelve other monasteries.

Benedict wrote a rule for these monks, known today as the Rule of St. Benedict. Benedict wanted to ensure that the monastery was not a place of harsh discipline but a school for serving the Lord. According to Benedict, the life of a monk should involve both prayer and work. The monastery itself was a place of great hospitality

*Let us get up then, at long last, for the Scriptures rouse us when they say: "It is high time for us to arise from sleep" (Rom 13:11). Let us open our eyes to the light that comes from God, and our ears to the voice from heaven that every day calls our this charge: "If you hear his voice today, do not harden your hearts" (Ps 95:8). —Rule of St. Benedict, Prologue*

# Reflect

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

Benedict retreated to Rome's foothills in order to focus fully on Christ and practice prayer on his own. What do you think might be attractive about living in solitude or in a monastic community? What would you gain from spending a day in silence, speaking to God in prayer and work?

# Act

The Rule of St. Benedict is a centuries-old book that has guided countless Christians - monastics and lay people alike - as they strive toward discipleship in Christ. Spend time with this prayer from the Prologue to the Rule of St. Benedict and then spend 5 minutes listening to God. What might you do this week to respond to God in your life?

*Loving Father, help me to listen carefully to your commands. Incline the ear of my heart to you, so that I may receive willingly and carry out effectively whatever you advise me to do. Disregarding disobedience, may I, in obedience, return to you.*

## Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin

- ◆ 1823-1894; 1831-1877
- ◆ Feast Day: July 12
- ◆ Patron Saints of Lay Ministers and Married Couples



Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin, the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux, were a married couple who lived ordinary lives in an extraordinary way. Both wanted to enter religious orders and devote themselves completely to service and love of God but, upon meeting each other, it became clear that God had other plans for them. After marrying on July 13, 1858, Louis and Zélie enjoyed life together for 19 years. Louis worked as a clockmaker-jeweler and later as the manager for Zélie's lace-making business.

The Martins valued the family as a place for shared prayer, outreach to their local community, and growth in relationship with God. They shared a happy relationship but also knew pain and suffering. Of their nine children, four died during infancy or early childhood. The other five

came near to death in childhood sickness. Louis and his five daughters, Pauline, Marie, Céline, Thérèse, and Léonie, tragically lost Zélie to breast cancer when she was 44 years old. Of the five living Martin daughters, four entered the Carmelite Monastery of Lisieux and one became a Visitation sister.

Near the end of his life, Louis suffered mental health complications. St. Thérèse writes in her autobiography about the profound grief she experienced in seeing her father suffer, but she also writes beautifully about the humble way he carried himself in the midst of this suffering. Louis died on July 29, 1894 at age 71.

Louis and Zélie Martin model what it means for marriage to be a sacrament of love and holiness. The Martins call us to be attentive to the movement of the Holy Spirit even in the midst of confusing and painful events. They were beatified on October 19, 2008 by Pope Benedict XVI. Pope Francis canonized them as saints, the first spouses canonized as a couple, on October 18, 2015.

*Saints Louis and Zélie Martin, today we turn to you in prayer. By fulfilling the duties of your state in life and practicing the evangelical virtues as spouses and as parents, you have modeled for us an exemplary Christian life. May the example of your unwavering trust in God and your constant willingness to surrender all the joys, the trials, the sorrows and the sufferings that filled your life encourage us to persevere in our daily challenges and to remain in joy and Christian hope. Amen. —Prayer of Spouses and Parents to Saints Louis And Zélie Martin*

# *Reflect*

What about the lives of St. Louis and St. Zélie stand out to you?

Louis and Zélie Martin were the first couple with children to be canonized in the same ceremony. Louis and Zélie created a humble home of faith, hope, and charity for their children.

Take some time to think about your own parents or guardians. What have they done for you? What are you grateful for? How have they helped nourish the virtues of faith, hope, and love within you?

# *Act*

Write a letter of gratitude to your parents today, perhaps using some of your reflections from above. After you are finished, share it with them!



## St. Kateri Tekakwitha

- ◆ 1656–1680; New York, United States
- ◆ Feast Day: July 14
- ◆ Patron Saint of the Environment and Ecology

In 1677, Kateri decided to find a community where she would feel welcomed and loved. Gathering up her courage, she left her village and walked to a Christian mission in Sault St. Louis, near Montreal – 200 miles from her home! Here, she was able to practice her Catholicism freely and as a part of a faith community.

Kateri, who had never completely recovered from smallpox, died on April 17, 1680. Miracles and appearances are said to have taken place after her death. She was beatified in 1980, and on October 21, 2012 was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI.

Known as the “Lily of the Mohawks,” Kateri Tekakwitha is the first beatified Native American. She was born in New York to a Mohawk chief and a Christian Algonquin. When she was only four years old, her family members died from smallpox. Kateri survived the disease but was left disfigured and partially blind. When she was orphaned, Kateri’s relatives took her in and raised her.

As she was growing up, Kateri decided that she did not wish to get married. This decision, however, was not acceptable to her community. When she was twenty years old, she met a Jesuit missionary, Father Jacques de Lamberville. Under his guidance, she converted to Catholicism and was baptized on Easter Sunday. This only increased the disapproval of her relatives, and she felt very alone in her village.

*Lord God, you called the virgin, Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, to shine among the Indian people as an example of innocence of life. Through her intercession, may all peoples of every tribe, tongue, and nation, having been gathered into your Church, proclaim your greatness in one song of praise. –Opening Prayer of the Feast of Kateri Tekakwitha*

# *Reflect*

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

Kateri is the patron saint of the environment and ecology. Along her 200 mile journey, Kateri would have experienced many incredible natural sights - from lakes and rivers to mountains and valleys. How can we better foster an understanding of the environment and the ecology as elements we are charged to steward and protect? What are some issues facing the environment today that we need to address both now and in the future?

# *Act*

Pope Francis has encouraged Christians to be caretakers of creation and good stewards of our planet's resources such as food and water. What can you do this week to be a better steward of the resources you have such as food and water?

## St. Mary Magdalene

- ◆ First Century
- ◆ Feast Day: July 22
- ◆ Patron Saint of Repentant Sinners, Hairdressers, and the Contemplative Life



Mary Magdalene was among Jesus' closest disciples. She was present at some of the most important events at the end of Jesus' life, namely his crucifixion, burial, and Resurrection. Like Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene is an example of the role that women played in Jesus' ministry and of his respect for women.

Luke introduces Mary as one of the women following Jesus and mentions that she was healed of seven demons by Jesus. From this point, she actively followed Jesus all the way to the moment of his death.

Mary Magdalene was present at the execution of Jesus. She had to stand by and watch as the man who she was called to follow was crucified like a criminal. She was also present when Jesus was placed in the tomb and joined the other women in preparing spices and perfumes with which to anoint his body.

In her most important role, Mary Magdalene was the primary witness to the Resurrection. All four Gospels name Mary as one of the women, or the only woman, who discovered the empty tomb. Mark and John name Mary as the first person to whom Jesus appeared after his death and Resurrection. She was overjoyed at the sight of Jesus. He then sent her to proclaim the news of his Resurrection to the other disciples. Mary Magdalene is often referred to as the "Apostle to the Apostles" for the part she played as a witness to the Resurrection.

Many legends and stories surround the rest of Mary Magdalene's life. Some have argued that Mary spent the end of her life in southern France. Her burial place is said to be in Saint-Maximin. Regardless of how she spent her life after her time with Jesus, we remember her for her faith and devotion to Jesus. She must have been a close disciple of Jesus for him to appear to her after his death and Resurrection. She holds a privileged place in Scripture and the Christian Tradition.

*Father, your Son first entrusted to Mary Madalene the joyful news of His resurrection. By her prayers and example may we proclaim Christ as our living Lord and one day see Him in glory, for He lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. —Opening Prayer of the Feast of Mary Magdalene*



# *Reflect*

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

What do you think it might have been like to be a witness to the Resurrection?

# *Act*

Mary Magdalene was entrusted with the joyful news of the Resurrection. Take a moment this week to share the good news of the Gospel. Pick a way in which you would like to act like Jesus for someone else this week.

## St. Joachim and St. Anne

- ◆ First Century
- ◆ Feast Day: July 26
- ◆ Patron Saints of Grandparents



St. Joachim and St. Anne are the parents of Mary, the Mother of God. Tradition tells us that they were unable to have a child and prayed to God for this gift. An angel appeared to Anne and said that she would have a child whose name would be known to the ends of the earth. Anne promised that this child, whether male or female, would be dedicated to God. When a beautiful girl was born, Joachim and Anne named her Mary, and when she was old enough, she was brought to the temple and presented to God.

This story tells us a great deal of God's relationship with his people. Throughout the Bible, there are stories of couples unable to have children who miraculously give birth through the power of God. Joachim and Anne are in relationship with this same God who is able to work wonders. The salvation brought through Jesus Christ does not simply begin with Jesus'

birth but through the caring relationship that God has established with God's people from the first moment of creation. God's love brings forth gifts beyond our imagination, including children born in impossible situations. With God the impossible is made possible.

Thus, while we know little about Joachim and Anne, we know that they are part of a great generation of saints who have trusted in God's ability to work wonders in the life of God's people. As we think about our own relationships, there are many people who act as quiet, almost unknown saints in our lives. By simply living out their vocation of love for Mary as parents, Joachim and Anne helped prepare Mary to love and serve her own son, Jesus Christ.

*God of our ancestors, you gave Saints Joachim and Anne the privilege of being the parents of Mary, the mother of your incarnate Son. May their prayers help us to attain the salvation you have promised to your people.*

*—Opening prayer for the Feast of Joachim and Anne, parents of Mary*

# *Reflect*

What about the lives of St. Joachim and St. Anne stand out to you?

Imagine you were Jesus' grandmother or grandfather. What are some things you would try to teach him or some activities you would do with him?

# *Act*

Take a moment this week to call a grandparent, an elder relative, or someone you look up to. Share a time when you learned something significant from him or her, and give thanks. This can be as simple as a story about baking cookies, playing cards, or watching performances with them.

## St. Ignatius of Loyola

- ◆ 1491-1556
- ◆ Feast Day: July 31
- ◆ Patron Saint of Jesuits and Retreats



St. Ignatius of Loyola is best known as the founder of the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits. Born in Spain in 1491, Ignatius became a soldier. At age 30, a cannon ball shattered his leg while leading a battle against the French. The French soldiers carried him through the mountains to his family home in Loyola where he spent several months confined to bed.

As he healed, Ignatius read a book on the life of Christ and another on the lives of the saints. He became inflamed with God's love, often imagining himself in the midst of Christ's life and ministry. Before making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, Ignatius spent several months outside the town of Manresa. This period was marked by both experiences of desolation, or feeling nothing in prayer, and the consolation of God's grace.

Ignatius' recordings of the reflections and practices that allowed him to grow in relationship with God became the heart of the Spiritual Exercises. In the first week, one contemplates the mystery of salvation offered through Christ. The second week is an imagination of the life of Christ's ministry. The third week is devoted to placing oneself into the scenes of Christ's passion and death. Finally, the fourth week is a focus on the wonders of the resurrection.

The Spiritual Exercises became essential to the spirituality of the Society of Jesus. The religious order was devoted to the service of the Pope, including missionary work in India and China and the opening of schools. Today, Jesuits operate universities and high schools throughout the world. In addition, they continue to serve the poor. Ignatius encouraged daily reflection through the Examen Prayer, paying attention to times one felt close to God and times when they struggled to see God.

*Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will, All I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only love of you and your grace. That is enough for me. —Suscipe Prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola*

# *Reflect*

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

Ignatius read books on the saints that moved him to serve Christ. Has a book, movie, painting or other work of art ever inspired you? Reflect on what it was about this work of art that was particularly striking.

# *Act*

Pray the Suscipe Prayer of St. Ignatius that is found at the bottom of his biography. What has God given you that you are thankful for today? How can you return this gift to God? Conclude by praying an Our Father.



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