



Teaching the **Saints**

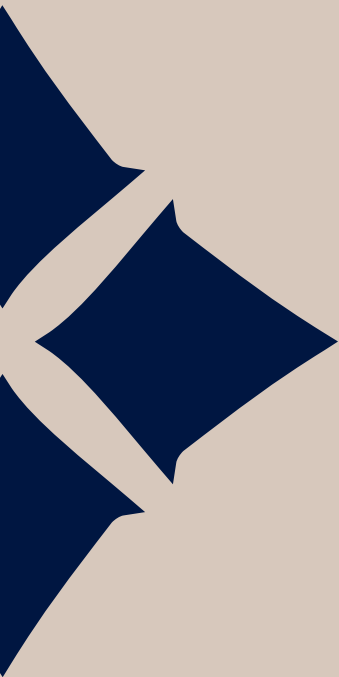
A Workbook for
Faith Formation
and Education

Saints for the month of
AUGUST

McGRATH INSTITUTE FOR CHURCH LIFE



Where higher learning meets faithful service.



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.

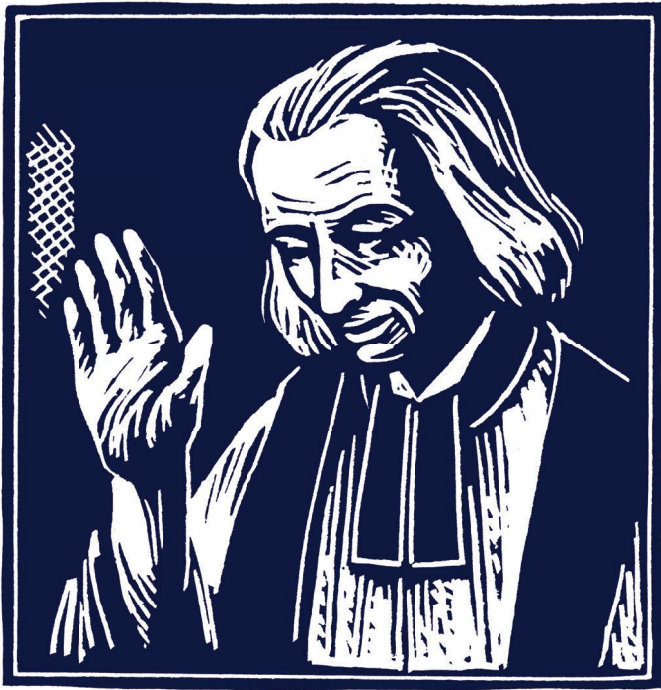
The worksheets can be used by youth, parents, teachers, religious educators and ministers to celebrate saint feast days during August. Adapt the worksheets for use in the classroom, home or parish to highlight the myriad and unique ways that God calls us to use our gifts to serve the Church and world.

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. John Vianney

- ◆ 1786-1859; France
- ◆ Feast Day: August 4
- ◆ Patron Saint of Parish Priests



John Vianney, also known as the Curé d'Ars, always had difficulty in school. During his time at the seminary, he struggled with his studies and could not seem to learn Latin. This posed a problem since all of the classes were taught in Latin! A priest named Abbé Balley saw John's faith and goodness and decided to tutor him. With his help, John was ordained in 1815.

John Vianney's first and only assignment was to Ars, a small French village of just over two hundred people. Despite the size and remoteness of the village, John worked hard and soon revitalized the church in Ars. He visited every parishioner and taught the children religion. He was best known, however, for his role as confessor. When people confessed their sins to John, they felt understood and comforted by his compassion. Many even began to call him a miracle worker.

His reputation soon spread, and Ars became a place of pilgrimage. Between 1830 and 1845, 300 people came to Ars each day. This meant that John spent countless hours in the confessional—often between twelve and sixteen hours a day! Wishing for solitude and peace, John tried to leave Ars on a number of occasions, but he always came back. He also never accepted any promotions or public recognition for his work.

Just before he died, 20,000 people were visiting Ars each year. His years of spiritual guidance eventually took their toll, and John Vianney died on August 4, 1859. He is looked up to as a model for priests and Christians everywhere.

The interior life is like a sea of love in which the soul is plunged and drowned. Just as a mother holds her child's face in her hands to cover it with kisses, so does God hold the devout person. —St. John Vianney

Reflect

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

John served in one parish in Ars for more than 40 years. Within this time, he heard hundreds of people confess their sins each and every day. Why do you think John placed so much emphasis on the Sacrament of Confession?

Act

Abbé Balley saw how much John struggled to learn Latin. With Abbé's patience and John's perseverance, John became the priest he was called to be.

Have you seen someone struggling with a subject or task that comes easily to you? This week, offer your assistance to them.



St. Dominic

- ◆ 1170-1221; Spain
- ◆ Feast Day: August 8
- ◆ Patron Saint of Astronomers

At age 14, Dominic worked hard as a student of theology and other subjects. After ten years of studying, a famine struck the area where he lived. Dominic could not justify spending money on things like school supplies while his neighbors were starving, so he sold all of his possessions to help them. Dominic then became a priest of the cathedral at Osma and began a life of ministry in the Church.

At this time, a heretical group called the Albigensians, or the Cathari, was gaining popularity in southern France and northern Italy. The Albigensians believed that matter was evil and that all people must abstain from sexual activities and follow very strict diets. The Church did not support the Albigensians' beliefs

and practices. In Dominic's extensive travels with Bishop Diego of Azevedo, the two men encountered the Albigensians and established groups of preachers and teachers to strengthen the Church and to deal with these widespread heretical beliefs. After Diego's death, Dominic was in charge of these groups, which eventually grew into the Order of Preachers or Black Friars. Today, we know them as the Dominicans.

Early on, Dominic encouraged members of the order to travel and spread God's Word. Dominic, too, traveled extensively throughout his life, and today Dominicans are present in 86 countries. They take a vow of poverty and are devoted to contemplative prayer and intellectual studies. Dominic is admired for seeing that the Church needed to be strengthened and renewed. He responded to this need by creating a new, vibrant community devoted to preaching and helping others encounter God's word.

May God the Father who made us bless us. May the Son send his healing among us.

May God the Holy Spirit move within us and give us eyes to see with, ears to hear with, and hands that your work might be done.

May we walk and preach the Word of God to all.

May the angels of peace watch over us and lead us by God's grace to the Kingdom. Amen.

—Prayer of St. Dominic

Reflect

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

Have you ever heard something shared about an aspect of the faith that you know to be untrue? What was it? What do you think is the best way to approach those who don't understand the faith and have a conversation with them?

Act

People recognized Dominic's holiness because of the ways he served the poor, defended the faith, and educated others. The Order of the Dominicans continues those charisms today. Pick one of those charisms and commit to living it out in one particular way this week.



St. Edith Stein

- ◆ 1891-1942; Poland
- ◆ Feast Day: August 9
- ◆ Co-Patron Saint of Europe

went after many Christians from Jewish families or converts from Judaism who were living in the Netherlands. Just as Edith was planning to move to a convent in Switzerland, she and her sister Rosa, also a convert from Judaism, were seized by the Nazis. On August 9, 1942, Edith was put to death at the Auschwitz concentration camp.

Throughout her frightening ordeal, Edith held on to her faith in God. She stands as a model of goodness and conviction in the midst of undeniable evil. One of our more contemporary saints, Edith Stein was canonized in Rome on October 12, 1998.

Edith Stein, also known as Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, grew up in a Jewish family but considered herself an atheist as a young woman.

Extremely intelligent and well educated, Edith studied philosophy under Edmund Husserl at Freiburg University and earned her Ph.D. in 1916. Through her studies, Edith encountered Catholicism. Her interest in the religion grew, and after reading St. Teresa of Ávila's autobiography, she chose to be baptized Catholic in 1921.

In the early 1930s, Edith was teaching in Germany when the Nazis came to power. Because of her Jewish background, Edith was fired from her position. A year later, Edith joined the Carmelite community of nuns in Cologne. In order to escape the Nazi threat, she later moved to the Netherlands. However, the Nazis soon

How wonderful are your gracious wonders! All we can do is be amazed and stammer and fall silent because intellect and words fail. —St. Edith Stein

Reflect

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

Edith Stein learned and embodied the idea that her faith life and work life could be integrated. She later reflected, "It was not until I had understood this that I seriously began to approach academic work again," and pursued becoming a professor, which was near impossible at the time, especially for a Jewish woman.

How have you seen your studies overlap with your faith life?

Act

Edith Stein's encounter with St. Teresa of Avila's autobiography led her not only to Catholicism but also toward the Carmelite order. Take a moment to think about a book, experience, idea, or something else that has influenced your faith recently. Why was it influential? Think about how you can put it into action this week.

St. Clare of Assisi

- ◆ 1193-1253; Assisi, Italy
- ◆ Feast Day: August 11
- ◆ Patroness of Television



Clare was a young aristocratic woman who heard the preaching of St. Francis, an Italian who gave up his possessions and inheritance to travel place-to-place preaching. Clare 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. She tried her best to imitate the life of Jesus.

In 1212, Francis invited Clare to lead a group of women in a life of poverty and chastity like Francis and his followers. Clare's family did not support her decision to start her community. They tried to bring her home, but Clare refused to give in. In 1215, Francis offered Clare and her community a small house attached to a church named San Damiano and named her abbess. Revising and expanding the basic Rule that Francis had written for them, Clare became the first woman to write a Rule for other women, which was approved in 1253.

Clare and her followers, later known as the Poor Clares, lived simple lives of faith. Convents quickly began to spread across Europe. During the last years of Clare's life, which were consumed by illness, the pope and other high-ranking leaders of the Church visited her and paid tribute to her hard work and devotion to Christ.

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.

We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become. If we love things, we become a thing. If we love nothing, we become nothing.

—St. Clare of Assisi

Reflect

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

At age 24, St. Francis heard Christ on the crucifix say, "Francesco, ripara la mia chiesa," or "Francis, repair my church." At age 18, Clare met Francis and almost immediately decided to answer the call to live out the Gospel through poverty, chastity, and obedience as he did. She became the abbess of a small house attached to a church.

"Repair my church." If Jesus said this to you today, how would you interpret the message? How would you respond to this call?

Act

Try to exchange some time spent watching television or scrolling social media for time spent in Adoration or prayer instead. Pray through St. Clare that you might be filled with the strength and peace to persevere in your classes, activities, and other obligations this week.

St. Jane de Chantal

- ◆ 1572-1641
- ◆ Feast Day: August 12
- ◆ Patron Saint of Forgotten People, Widows and Parents Separated from Their Children



St. Jane de Chantal was born in 1572 in Dijon, France. At age 20, she married Baron de Chantal and they were blessed with seven children, although three died in infancy. Jane became a widow at age 28 with four young children.

During the season of Lent in 1604, Jane heard the powerful preaching of St. Francis de Sales and asked him to serve as her spiritual director. Throughout their time together, Jane grew to understand how God was working in her life, even amidst the difficulties of raising four children by herself. Jane discerned that the Lord was calling her to serve the Church as a consecrated nun. Once her children were older and no longer dependent on her, Jane committed her life to the Church as a vowed religious. In 1610, Francis de Sales collaborated with Jane to found and establish a new religious order, the Congregation of the Visitation of Holy Mary.

This new order was modeled after the meekness and humility of the Virgin Mary. Many of the women who joined the order were often considered too ill or elderly for other religious orders. The Visitation sisters were called to be active in the world and perform works of mercy throughout France. They were to live out humility in action, sharing the love of Jesus with all, especially the weakest of society.

Jane faced many trials throughout the remainder of her life. The deaths of many loved ones, including three of her adult children, further challenged Jane's faith. During this time, Jane faced periods of interior darkness and spiritual dryness. Still, she strived to live out the will of God in her life.

In 1641 at age 69, Jane passed away. Throughout France, she was revered for her life of holiness and service to others. She was officially canonized by the Catholic Church in 1767. Although her life as a wife, mother, and consecrated nun was marked with sorrow, Jane knew true joy came from understanding and living out the Christian call to conform one's life to the love of Jesus Christ.

You want to be humble? Try to know yourself well...trust only and continuously in God, persuaded that not able to do anything by yourselves, you can do all with His grace and powerful help. -St. Jane de Chantal

Reflect

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

Francis de Sales helped Jane discern a new path for her life. Who is someone who has helped you find your way recently? What have you learned from him or her about yourself, your strengths and weakness, and ways in which you should strive to serve God?

Act

Jane is the patron saint of forgotten people, drawing on the fact that the Visitation order founded by Jane accepted many women who were thought to be too ill or old for other orders. Take a moment this week to call or get in touch with a grandparent or an elderly person you may know. Or, take a moment to call or get in touch with someone you haven't talked to in a long time.

St. Maximilian Kolbe

- ◆ 1894–1941; Poland
- ◆ Feast Day: August 14
- ◆ Patron Saint of Those Suffering from Drug Addiction



Maximilian Kolbe was a Franciscan priest who had a special devotion to Mary. He and the group that he founded, the Militia of the Immaculata, tried to spread devotion to Mary through their monthly paper and evangelization. His work included trips to Japan and to India, all while suffering from tuberculosis.

Maximilian is best known for the way in which he lived the last few years of his life. As the Nazis rose in power, he spoke out against them and used his paper to spread these anti-Nazi sentiments. Even though he had a German background, he refused to protect himself by becoming a legal German national.

In February of 1941, Maximilian was imprisoned in Warsaw and suffered great abuse and torture. He was released, only to be imprisoned a second time in May and sent to Auschwitz. While there, Maximilian continued in his ministry as a priest.

He heard confessions, comforted other prisoners, and said Mass with bread and wine that had been smuggled into the camp.

In July, a prisoner attempted to escape. As a penalty, ten prisoners were chosen to be executed. Among them was a young husband and father who begged to be spared. Maximilian spoke up and asked that he be taken in place of the young man. The officer switched the men, and Maximilian and the others were sent to a starvation chamber. For two weeks, he tried to keep their spirits up through praying the rosary and through singing. Eventually, they began to die. Maximilian was the last to remain conscious. On August 14, 1941, he and the four men who were still alive were injected with phenol. Their bodies were then burned. Maximilian died on a feast of Mary—the Feast of the Assumption.

We remember Maximilian Kolbe for his courage under horrific circumstance. He held on to his beliefs and love of God in a time of great despair for so many people.

No, we will never give in, we will hold out to the end, their terror will never kill the Polish soul. If we die, we will die in holiness and peace, accepting the will of God. —St. Maximilian Kolbe

Reflect

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

In a vision, Mary appeared to the child Maximilian, holding a white and red crown representing purity and martyrdom. She asked Maximilian if he was willing to accept either crown. Maximilian reportedly said, "I would accept them both."

Imagine you were asked the same question. Would you accept a life lived in chastity, a life ending with martyrdom, or both? What would be easy for you? What would be difficult?

Act

Maximilian founded the Militia of the Immaculata in 1917 encouraging others to entrust their lives fully to the Blessed Virgin Mary as he had done. Take a few moments this week to read about the work of the Militia of the Immaculata particularly in the United States. Consider asking Mary for her intercession for all those who suffer unjustly.

St. Rose of Lima

- ◆ 1586-1617; Peru
- ◆ Feast Day: August 23
- ◆ Patron Saint of Peru, South America, the Indies, and the Philippines



Rose was born with the name Isabel, but she was such a beautiful baby that she was compared to a rose, and the name stayed with her. Rose was devoted to her parents and tried to follow what they wanted for her. However, when they expressed their wish that she be married, Rose could not obey them.

She was incredibly devoted to Christ and lived a life of prayer in a small hut on her parents' property while she was a teenager. When suitors called, she deliberately tried to make herself look less attractive. Frustrated with her parents' wish for her to marry, she eventually took a vow of virginity and joined the Dominicans. She never

stopped loving her parents deeply. At one point, they were experiencing financial difficulties, so Rose sold flowers during the day and sewed at night to support them. She also extended her kindness to the poor of Lima by turning part of her family's home into an infirmary for the sick. Anyone, regardless of his or her race or economic status, was welcome. Through her work, she developed a close friendship with St. Martin de Porres, a fellow minister to the poor of Lima.

After three years of being very ill, Rose died on August 24, 1617, at age 31. A huge crowd of people gathered for the funeral of the woman who had been so kind to the people of Lima and had lived such a faithful life.

If only mortals would learn how great it is to possess divine grace, how beautiful, how noble, how precious. How many riches it hides within itself, how many joys and delights! —St. Rose of Lima

Reflect

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

Although a beautiful young lady, Rose chose a different life. She wanted the focus of her life to be her work and service to those in need. What do you think Rose's example can teach us about the connection between our external appearance and internal worth?

Act

Rose was known for her kindness. Think of one way you can actively practice kindness in your community, school or relationships this week.

St. Monica

- ◆ 332-387; North Africa
- ◆ Feast Day: August 27
- ◆ Patron Saint of Mothers and Alcoholics



Monica, who is best known as the mother of St. Augustine, was a woman of great faith and persistence. She endured a very difficult marriage. Her husband, Patricius, was a short-tempered man who drank too much and cheated on Monica. To make matters worse, her mother-in-law lived in their house and was a very difficult woman with whom to get along.

Despite her unpleasant living situation, Monica exercised great patience and prayed for the conversion of her husband and mother-in-law, who were both pagans. Eventually, she won them over, and they saw Monica for the good and faithful person she was. A year before his death, Patricius was baptized.

Monica and Patricius had three sons whom Monica loved very much. She wished to see them live morally good lives in the Church. She was especially concerned for Augustine, who was living a wild and dissolute lifestyle. Again, she was extremely patient and prayed that he might soon see the error of his ways.

In 383, Augustine left for Milan with his female companion and their son without telling his mother. Monica found out where they were going and followed them. Here, she became friends with Ambrose, the bishop of Milan. Ambrose was later responsible for mentoring Augustine and helping him in his conversion process. In 387, Monica witnessed the baptism of Augustine by Ambrose. Her work was complete.

On their way back to Africa, Monica died at the age of fifty-five. She died peacefully in the knowledge that her son had found his way to God. In his spiritual autobiography, *Confessions*, Augustine wrote extensively about his mother and what a profound influence she had on his life.

God of mercy, comfort those in sorrow. The tears of St. Monica moved you to convert her son St. Augustine to the faith of Christ. By their prayers, help us to turn from our sins and to find your loving forgiveness.

—Opening Prayer of the Feast of St. Monica

Reflect

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

Monica remained steadfast in faith despite family tensions. Their lack of faith did not cause her to lose hope in God or in her family members, but instead drew her even deeper into love for them.

Imagine you are in Monica's place. How would you try to foster a sense of community even in a group of difficult people? What would be important for you to do?

Act

Monica's selfless love and devotion is part of the reason why she is the patron saint of mothers. Take a moment to give thanks or pray for your own mother or someone who has been a mother-figure to you. Consider telling them about the influence they have been in your life.



St. Augustine

- ◆ 354-430; North Africa
- ◆ Feast Day: August 28
- ◆ Patron Saint of Theologians, Printers, and Brewers

Augustine grew up under the careful guidance of his mother, St. Monica. She prayed that Augustine would follow the example of his father and grandmother and be baptized in the Christian faith. Augustine, however, was drawn to philosophy and could not comprehend how one could think philosophically and accept Christianity.

He also led a rather wild and unruly lifestyle. Before he was 20 years old, he had a son with a woman to whom he was not married. Monica, of course, was terribly upset by his choices and continued to pray for his conversion.

After various jobs teaching rhetoric, Augustine was appointed as a professor in Milan. Here, he came under the influence of Ambrose, the bishop of Milan. Through listening to Ambrose's sermons, Augustine came to understand that Christianity could coincide with philosophy and had much to offer those who craved intellectual

discussion. Although he could accept Christianity in his head, he had a difficult time accepting its moral teachings in practice.

In *Confessions*, the first spiritual autobiography of its kind, Augustine tells the story of his conversion. He was sitting under a fig tree when he heard some children say, "Take up and read!" He took this to mean that he should open his Bible and read whatever passage he saw. His eyes fell to Romans 13:13-14: "Not in orgies and drunkenness, not in promiscuity and licentiousness, not in rivalry and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh." This was the call to conversion that Augustine was seeking. He put his wild lifestyle behind him and was baptized by Ambrose in 387 at age 33.

In 395, Augustine was named Bishop of Hippo. He spent his time carrying out his duties as leader of the church in Hippo, setting up monastic communities, traveling, and writing major theological works. These writings have been some of the most influential writings in the theology and teaching of the Church. Augustine died in 430, but his legacy lives on today.

My love of you, O Lord, is not some vague feeling: it is positive and certain. Your word struck into my heart and from that moment I loved you. —St. Augustine

Reflect

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

Augustine experienced a very profound moment of transformation. Spend some time reflecting on a big or small moment of transformation in your life recently. What happened? Where did you see God?

Act

When Augustine heard children cry out, "Take up and read," he let his eyes fall upon a Bible passage at random and began to read. The Holy Spirit spoke so much to Augustine through these words and it helped him commit his life more completely to God.

The practice of taking and reading Scripture is known as Lectio Divina, or "divine reading." Take a moment to learn more about Lectio Divina. Consider practicing it with one or more of the daily Scripture readings this week.



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