

Will the Real Saints Please Stand?

We have all heard of St. Mary and St. Thomas. They are canonized saints – saints officially recognized as “holy ones” who are united with God in heaven. The word saint has at least two other meanings as well. What is a saint anyway?

1. **A saint is a person officially recognized by the Church, through the process called canonization, as a person whose life demonstrates Christian ideals.** The Church canonizes the person, proclaiming that this person is a model Christian and is, without a doubt, united with God in heaven. Many Catholics have devotions to particular canonized saints. Miracles are attributed to these saints’ intercessory prayers to God. St. Francis of Assisi would fall into this category.
2. **A saint is anyone who is in heaven.** A person cannot be united with God in heaven unless that person is a “holy one;” therefore, any person who is with God in heaven is a saint. These saints have not been officially recognized by the Catholic Church through the process of canonization. They are saints nonetheless by virtue of their heavenly “address.” Any deceased member of your family who was faithful to God would fall into this category of saint.
3. **A saint is anyone who is a follower of Christ.** You don’t have to be dead to be a saint. The first chapter of Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians refers to living Christians as saints. Some Bibles use the phrase “holy ones” in place of the word “saints.” Saint means “holy one;” therefore, anyone who faithfully follows Jesus is a saint – a saint who is living on Earth. In this sense, you could be considered a saint.

Put a picture, a drawing, or some kind of symbol that represents a canonized saint, a family saint, and saint “You”. Add more circles for the Saint “Yous” so everyone in the household has one.

1. **Canonized Saint:** You may want to go to www.americancatholic.org/Features/Saints/patrons.asp for a listing of canonized saints on the internet.
2. **Family Saint:** Discuss as a family who some of your family saints would be. These could be deceased relative whose lives exemplify Christian discipleship in some way. This is an excellent opportunity for family storytelling.
3. **Saint “You”:** Talk about the good qualities of each living member of your immediate family. These saintly qualities, inspired by your faith in Jesus, give each of you the right to the title of saint.

Canonized Saint

Saint _____

Family Saint