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## Saint

John Donnelly

Marquette University, [john.p.donnelly@marquette.edu](mailto:john.p.donnelly@marquette.edu)

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**Saint** is a holy person who becomes a religious hero by exemplifying a virtue or virtues of his or her religion. The word comes from the Latin word *sanctus*, meaning a holy one.

The followers of a religion regard its saints as unusually blessed. They believe these saints are able to give special blessings and to exercise certain superhuman powers. All the world's major religions *revere* (deeply respect) saints, but in different ways. Some religions have formal procedures for officially granting sainthood to certain men and women. Other religions do not formally recognize saints, but they have religious practices that honor holy people.

Many people achieve sainthood because they played a major role in the history of their religion or because they symbolize a traditional feature of it. For example, Saint Paul converted to Christianity from another religion and became a great missionary who sought out converts. Some saints are martyrs who died for a holy cause. Many Christians who died rather than give up their faith during early Christianity are now considered saints.

A number of saints are considered especially close to God. Roman Catholics believe that the Virgin Mary is so loved by God that she rose bodily to heaven.

Some saints, such as Buddha, are believed to have gained superhuman or special knowledge about, or insight into, holy mysteries. Eastern Orthodox Christians revere Saint John Chrysostom for his wisdom.

Some people are revered as saints because before or after death they performed miracles and pleaded with God for blessings or curses on particular people. Others achieved sainthood because their *relics* (remains or possessions) or some place associated with them came to be regarded as holy.

Still others are considered saints because before or after death they became *demigods* (partly a god and partly human) and had divine powers. Before World War II, believers in one form of Shintoism regarded the emperor of Japan as divine.

### Non-Christian saints

Judaism forbids praying to any being other than God. But Jews honor saintly people as heroes. In Jewish worship, the heroic deeds of holy people may be recited as examples of faithfulness to God. Such early heroes as Jacob and David sometimes broke Jewish laws. But later Jewish saints were learned in the *Torah* (religious law) and firm in following its rules of behavior. Jewish saints have been called "toilers in the Torah." The most famous Jewish saints include Hillel the Elder and Akiba ben Joseph.

Islam credits supernatural powers only to *Allah* (God). All Muslims acknowledge as saints such heroes as Muhammad and Ali. The Islamic holy book, the Koran, does not provide for the worship of saints, but each locality cherishes a saint called *wali* (benefactor, companion, or friend). Muslim saints are considered to be close to God but not divine. The spiritual powers they exercised as living people increase when they die. Then, their influence centers on their tombs and relics, especially their robes. Muslims believe each saint can perform a special miracle. A visit to a saint's tomb, with its holy objects and often its pool or fountain, is believed to provide ad-

vice, to cure a disease, or to grant children to a childless woman.

The Oriental religions have a greater variety of practices and beliefs regarding saints than do the Western religions. Buddhism honors the buddhas and their close disciples, along with relics and sacred places associated with them. Buddhist monks and nuns recognize patron saints as special guardians, and Buddhist martyrs are honored as religious heroes. Hinduism has no official saints for all Hindus. There are many ranks of semidivine local or regional saints. A Hindu village, tribe, or religious order may raise its own heroes or protectors to sainthood. Confucianism has holy men who are *sages* (wise men) of intellectual and moral superiority. The most famous sage is Confucius. Shintoism has no human saints or martyrs because its holy people are considered divine.

### Christian saints

The more traditional Christian denominations emphasize the honoring of saints. The Eastern Orthodox Churches, the Roman Catholic Church, some Lutheran churches, and the churches of the Anglican Communion regard many of the same people as saints.

A *canonized* saint is a person whose name is included in a *canon* (official list). Christian saints were first considered saints by common agreement among people in a certain area, and later by regional bishops. Gradually, the authority to canonize saints for Latin Christians centered on the pope.

The earliest Christian writings call all believers *saints*. This practice has been renewed by several modern denominations, including the Mormons (Latter-day Saints). During the 200's, the term *saint* referred specifically to martyrs, and in the 300's to bishops. By the 500's, the term referred to all departed heroes and heroines of Christianity who were honored in worship services. In the early forms of honoring martyrs, local believers gathered at their tombs on the anniversaries of their deaths. The fame of certain saints gradually spread to other congregations, and by the 500's some famous saints were revered throughout the Christian world.

After many martyrs, bishops, monks, scholars, miracle-workers, and other heroes and heroines had entered the list of saints, their relics were considered able to give special blessings. Believers asked the saints to plead with God for special favors. The Christian saints were popularly regarded as holy before they became officially recognized as saints. During the Middle Ages, popular religious sentiment sometimes disregarded the difference between worshiping or adoring God and *venerating* (showing religious devotion to) saints. By the early 1500's, many people prayed to the saints and their relics for special assurances of salvation. Certain practices developed around the veneration of some Christian saints, but were later considered superstitious. For example, many people thought St. Lazarus could cure measles if a person who had the disease prayed to him.

During the Reformation, both Protestants and Catholics attacked abuses in the worship of saints. Most Protestants refused to revere any persons as saints except certain heroes mentioned in the New Testament. After the Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church restated the manner in which followers could call on saints for

help or protection. Catholic saints were clearly ranked lower than God, and superstitious or other *impious* (disrespectful) practices regarding them were outlawed. Roman Catholics, members of Eastern Orthodox Churches, and some Protestants still ask saints to plead with God in their behalf.

### Roman Catholic saints

Present Roman Catholic procedures of canonization were officially established between the late 1500's and the mid-1600's. A commission appointed by the church strictly examines the subject's life and works and any miracles associated with the person. If the investigation produces enough evidence, the person is eligible for *beatification*. That is, he or she may officially be declared "blessed." If further investigation produces proof of two miracles associated with the person, he or she may be canonized as a saint.

Canonization consists of declaring that a person believed to be holy was indeed a saint during his or her lifetime and is in heaven with God. This official status does not approve all that the individual said, did, or wrote. Among Roman Catholics, only the pope can grant official recognition to a person nominated for beatification or canonization. In 1969, the Vatican announced a revision of the church's liturgical calendar, which lists the feast days of saints celebrated by the church. The new calendar listed 58 saints. But many more saints could continue to be venerated locally. The Roman Catholic Church also made optional the celebration of the feast days of other saints.

Children of Catholic parents and many others are named after a saint, often the saint on whose day the child was born or baptized. That saint becomes the child's special guardian or patron. A number of cities, especially in the Western Hemisphere, are named after saints. They include Saint Louis, Missouri, and São Paulo (Saint Paul), Brazil. In many denominations, parish churches or congregations take the names of saints. Many Christians, recognizing that many holy men and women have never been canonized, celebrate them on All Saints' Day, November 1.

John Patrick Donnelly

**Related articles in World Book.** See *Canonization*; *All Saints' Day*; and the table of popes with the *Pope* article. Other related articles include:

Albertus Magnus, Saint  
Alphonsus Liguori, Saint  
Ambrose, Saint  
Andrew, Saint  
Anne, Saint  
Anselm, Saint  
Anthony of Padua, Saint  
Anthony of Thebes, Saint  
Aquinas, Saint Thomas  
Athanasius, Saint  
Augustine, Saint  
Augustine of Canterbury, Saint  
Bartholomew, Saint  
Basil, Saint  
Becket, Saint Thomas  
Bellarmine, Saint Robert  
Benedict of Nursia, Saint  
Bernadette, Saint  
Bonaventure, Saint  
Boniface, Saint  
Brébeuf, Saint Jean de

Bridget, Saint  
Cabrin, Saint Frances Xavier  
Canisius, Saint Peter  
Catherine of Siena, Saint  
Cecilia, Saint  
Christopher, Saint  
Chrysostom, Saint John  
David, Saint  
Dominic, Saint  
Dunstan, Saint  
Edward the Confessor  
Elizabeth, Saint  
Fisher, Saint John  
Francis de Sales, Saint  
Francis of Assisi, Saint  
George, Saint  
Ignatius, Saint  
Irenaeus, Saint  
James, Saint  
James the Greater, Saint  
James the Less, Saint  
Jean Baptiste de la Salle, Saint

Jerome, Saint  
Joan of Arc, Saint  
Jogues, Saint Isaac  
John, Saint  
John the Baptist, Saint  
Joseph  
Jude, Saint  
Justin the Martyr, Saint  
Louis IX  
Loyola, Saint Ignatius  
Luke, Saint  
Mark, Saint  
Martin of Tours, Saint  
Mary  
Matthew, Saint  
Matthias, Saint  
Michael, Saint  
More, Saint Thomas  
Neumann, Saint John N.  
Nicholas, Saint

Pachomius, Saint  
Patrick, Saint  
Paul, Saint  
Peter, Saint  
Philip of Bethsaida, Saint  
Rose of Lima, Saint  
Sebastian, Saint  
Seton, Saint  
Elizabeth Ann  
Simon, Saint  
Stanislas, Saint  
Stephen, Saint  
Swithun, Saint  
Teresa, Saint  
Thomas, Saint  
Valentine, Saint  
Vincent de Paul, Saint  
Vladimir I  
Xavier, Saint Francis  
Youville, Saint Marguerite d'

### Additional resources

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Woodward, Kenneth L. *Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why*. Simon & Schuster, 1990.

**Saint Andrews** lies on the east coast of Scotland between the cities of Edinburgh and Dundee. It is part of the North East Fife local government district, which has a population of 66,010. St. Andrews itself has about 16,000 people. For the location of St. Andrews, see *Scotland* (political map). This town is sometimes called the *Capital of Golf*. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club, founded in St. Andrews in 1754, establishes many of the rules for the game. The oldest university in Scotland, the University of St. Andrews, was founded in the town in 1411.

A. S. Mather

See also *Scotland* (picture: The Royal and Ancient Golf Club).

**Saint Andrews**, New Brunswick (pop. 1,652), is often called Saint Andrews-by-the-Sea. St. Andrews lies on Passamaquoddy Bay, about 60 miles (97 kilometers) west of St. John, and about 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) east of the United States border. For the location of St. Andrews, see *New Brunswick* (political map). The many small islands in the bay and the ocean shoreline make the town a popular tourist center. Scientists at the Saint Andrews Biological Station conduct fishery research. St. Andrews was founded in 1784 by United Empire Loyalists (see *United Empire Loyalists*).

T. W. Acheson

**Saint Augustine**, *AW guh STEEN*, Fla. (pop. 11,692), is the oldest permanent settlement established in the United States by Europeans. It was founded in 1565 by a Spanish explorer, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés. St. Augustine lies in northeastern Florida, near the Atlantic Ocean. For location, see *Florida* (political map).

Spain ruled St. Augustine for more than 200 years. Historians believe the Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de León visited what is now the St. Augustine area in 1513. During the late 1500's, St. Augustine served as Spain's military headquarters in North America. The English naval commander Sir Francis Drake looted and burned the settlement in 1586. Spain ruled St. Augustine until 1763, when the British gained control of it. Spain again