

St. John's Newsletter



Called to the Communion of Saints

Every time we pray the Apostle's Creed we pronounce that we believe in the communion of saints. Who are the saints? We are all called to be saints – to live our lives in such a way that we will be able to be in the heavenly kingdom with Jesus after our earthly life is over. We believe that the holy people before us are with him in the new Jerusalem in pure happiness.

Church history and tradition recognizes many saints that have lived exemplary lives, died in and for the faith as martyrs, and devoting their lives and gifts to helping others. We look to them asking for their prayers since we know they are close to Jesus. The Church recognizes that there are many people who are saints who haven't been officially canonized. Canonization does NOT make someone a saint. Living a life of faith and virtue is what makes a saint.

In the first five centuries of the Church, the process for recognizing a saint was based on public recognition. There was no formal canonical process as understood by today's standards. Beginning in the sixth century and continuing into the twelfth century, the intervention of the local bishop was required before someone could be canonized. The intervention of the local bishop usually began with a request from the local community for the bishop to recognize someone a saint. Upon studying the request and a written biography, if he found it favorable, the bishop would typically issue a decree, legitimize the liturgical cult and thereby canonize the person. Starting in the tenth century, the bishop would collect eyewitness testimony of those who knew the person and who had witnessed miracles, and he would provide a summary of the case to the Pope for his approval. The Pope then reviewed the cause, and if he approved it, he issued a decree declaring the person a canonized saint. When Pope Sixtus V reorganized the Roman Curia in 1588 he established the Congregation for Sacred Rites. One of its functions was to assist the Pope with reviewing causes. Except for a few canonical developments, from 1588 the process of canonization remained the same until 1917 when a universal Code of Canon Law was established which contained 145 canons (cc. 1999- 2144) on causes of canonization, and mandated that an episcopal process and an apostolic process be conducted. The episcopal process included the bishop verifying the reputation of the person, ensuring that a biography existed, collecting eye witness testimony and the person's written works. Then the Congregation for Sacred Rites reviewed the evidence submitted, collecting more evidence, studying the cause, investigating any alleged miracles and ultimately forwarding the cause to the Pope for his approval.

Five years must pass from the time of a candidate's death before a cause may begin. This is to allow greater balance and objectivity in evaluating the case and to let the emotions of the moment dissipate. The pope can dispense from this waiting period. During the process, the steps are Servant of God, Venerable, Blessed and Saint. There are many people who are in the process of review for canonization. Rev. Fulton J. Sheen will be named **Blessed** in September at St. Louis, MO.



Coming in September Newsletter – Rev. Fulton J. Sheen

Sources:

<https://www.usccb.org/offices/public-affairs/saints>

<https://i.pinimg.com/1200x/4c/4b/b0/4c4bb0811274e6845636ca6fd9d9453c.jpg>

Volume 17 - August 2026- St. John's Newsletter is a once-a-month publication aimed at providing you with items of interest about our Catholic faith. If there is a topic you are interested in, please contact the parish office and we will try to address it in future issues. – Submitted by Mary Jo Peters