

Holiness & Sainthood: A Universal Call

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INTRODUCTION

In our daily lives, we are often faced with challenging conversations with co-workers, family and friends. In these moments, we can become defensive, losing sight of shared values, goals and ideas. Have these discussions caused friction? Are there relationships strained by differing viewpoints? Have you grown frustrated with leaders?

Now is the time to consider mending these bonds. Drawing inspiration from the saints and Mary, who exemplify forgiveness and reconciliation, we can find guidance in their lives. Let their examples help us navigate divisive times, fostering unity and understanding.

PAUSE AND REFLECT

As you prepare to pray, pause to check in with your mind, heart and body. Our physical bodies can house emotional turmoil in places where we least expect. Take a few breaths to focus your attention. As you exhale, release any tension, and as you inhale, embrace peace.

In his discussion of sainthood, author and hagiographer Robert Ellsberg explains: “The object [of sainthood] is to be a whole, integrated and happy person ... someone whose life is aligned with the deepest purpose for their existence.”¹ Put this way, our personal call to sainthood becomes more clearly apparent. Ellsberg continues that recognizing and honoring these qualities in others opens our own path to a more deeply integrated life.

Choose one of the following saints



to sit with in prayer, perhaps taking notes on how it might inform the pursuit of aligning your life with the “deepest purpose of your existence.”

“The clearness of my conscience has made my heart hop for joy.”

— St. Thomas More

St. Thomas More, known as the patron saint of politicians, is a paragon for acting according to one’s conscience. Even in death, More balanced the demands of love with integrity and grace. Whether we realize it or not, we are always navigating internal and external politics. How can you be attentive to the values that inform your own conscience, and remain true to the call to love your neighbor?

“Nothing is far from God.”

— St. Monica

St. Monica is known for her patience.

She suffered greatly when her son, St. Augustine of Hippo, did not share her faith. However, she remained patient, not because she knew he would eventually come around, but for the sake of love for him. How can you embody a patience that is rooted in love, especially with those who hold different values than you?

CLOSING PRAYER

The image of Mary as an Untier of Knots, illustrated in the classic Baroque painting of the same name, depicts the mother of Jesus untying a rope with many knots in it. While the devotion has been popular in many parts of Latin America for some time, in his tenure, Pope Francis has made it known worldwide.

Consider where in your heart there are knots to be untied as we invite Mother Mary to intercede for us in prayer:

Mother of God, untie the knots of our hearts. Grant that we can embrace peace inwardly to exude your peace with others. Guide us in our own paths to sainthood, to a more deeply integrated life that is more closely aligned to your love, care and forgiveness. May we know our place in creating a safe space for all to be well; and may we serve God earnestly with our hands, our eyes, our thoughts and our hearts. Amen.

NOTE

1. Robert Ellsberg, “Walking the Path of Holiness: What I’ve Learned from a Lifetime of Studying Sainly Lives,” *America: The Jesuit Review*, June 29, 2023, <https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2023/06/29/all-saints-robert-ellsberg-245549>.