

Spend Lent with the Saints

Here are forty holy men and women to accompany you during Lent. Let their lives inspire you to courage, service, surrender, and fidelity. They will help you, as you journey with your family and faith community, to grow with them in faith, hope, and love.

Ten Who Changed Church or Society

Catherine de Hueck Doherty, Servant of God

According to Catherine de Hueck, “Christianity” is a verb. Her conviction is rooted in the failure of Christians to act during the Russian Revolution when many of her relatives were killed.

How can I demonstrate my Christianity?

Saint Joseph Calasanz

Joseph Calasanz was shocked by the desperation and ignorance of the poor he encountered in Rome. He wrote, “I have found the definitive way to serve God” and opened the first free school in Europe.

What can I do to alleviate suffering?

Saint John Bosco



Saints often have the ability to imagine new ways of accomplishing everyday tasks. For example, rather than employ the customary “fear of punishment” to teach children, John Bosco used faith, reason, and loving kindness.

Today, may your prayer be to find unfamiliar ways to respond to familiar situations.

Saint Camillus de Lellis

Camillus’ mother intentionally gave birth to her son in a stable in imitation of Jesus’ birth. Camillus spent years fighting and gambling before finally repenting and establishing a ministry of the sick.

Parenting largely involves sowing the seeds of faith and leaving the rest to God. Do I trust God?

Saint Catherine of Siena

Despite being almost illiterate, Catherine of Siena was named a Doctor of the Church for her writings. How? She dictated them.

Everyone has some physical or intellectual challenge. Before you feel defeated by your particular limitation, remember Catherine and ask, “How can I work around this?”

Saint Angela Merici

Angela Merici began what would become a worldwide community of educators by offering religious instruction to poor children in her neighborhood.

It’s easy to become overwhelmed by the innumerable needs of our families and the world. Instead, ask, “What can I do right here, right now?”

Saint Peter Claver, S.J.

Love is a verb; it must be demonstrated before it can truly be received by others. The Spanish missionary Peter Claver knew this and so ministered to people before ever mentioning the name of Jesus Christ.

How can I show my love for others today?

Saint Teresa of Ávila

Teresa faced many adversities while reforming her religious order. She always recognized God’s active presence in her life, even when she faced difficulties. She responded to God’s faithfulness and mysterious ways through her life of service and prayer.

Where do I see God?

Saint Pope John XXIII



By all accounts, John XXIII’s greatest achievement was convening the Second Vatican Council. Yet he also performed innumerable small acts of kindness. For example, he regularly visited hospitals, prisons, and schools.

In God’s eyes, great and small acts of love are equal. Which will I offer today?

Saint John of God

There are two kinds of people in the world: those who criticize a situation and those who do something about it. St. John, appalled by the conditions in a hospital where he was a patient, founded his own hospital.

Instead of complaining, ask, “What can I do about it?”

Ten Strong Women

Blessed Virgin Mary



Young, pregnant, unmarried though engaged, Mary trusted in God and became the first disciple of her Son,

Jesus, the one who was to save his people.

Trust that God will be with you even in uncertain and frightening situations.

Saint Elizabeth

Elizabeth and Zechariah got a surprise from God in their old age: a child, who would become John the Baptist.

Where has God surprised you? Are you open to God surprising you again?

Saint Elizabeth of Hungary

After she was widowed at age 20, Elizabeth found herself and her children at odds with her noble relatives who did not care for her generosity toward the poor.

Conflict and rejection are part of life. Ask God to be with you in those times.

Saint Frances of Rome

Frances experienced several vocations. She cared for the poor and sick, nursed her disabled husband, and called together a group of women to minister to the plague-stricken of Rome.

Be willing to shift gears to serve God and neighbor.

Saint Margaret of Scotland

Margaret was a pious queen who held large feasts for the common people in the castle and would give away her coats and shoes to the poor while out riding.

What is something important you can give away to someone in need?

Saint Kateri Tekakwitha



Disfigured by the smallpox that killed her father and mother, Kateri became the first Native American to

be canonized.

Try to look beyond appearances to see the goodness in every person.

Saint Elizabeth of Portugal

Elizabeth watched her son lead an armed revolt against his own father and twice rode out onto battlefields to make peace between family factions.

Find ways to be a peacemaker in your family, your community, and the world.

Saint Jane Frances de Chantal

“I regard her as one of the holiest souls I have ever met on this earth,” Saint Vincent de Paul said of Jane Frances. Even as the child of a wealthy family, she felt a connection to the poor who begged at the door.

What can you do to help the poor in body and spirit at your door?

Saint Hedwig

After her husband’s death, Hedwig joined a community of religious sisters, but she kept control of her property so she could still provide relief to the suffering.

Consider how you can use your resources to benefit the most people.

“The first end I propose in our daily work is to do the will of God; secondly, to do it in the manner he wills it; and thirdly, to do it because it is his will.”

Elizabeth Ann Seton

Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton



Mother of five and a widow at age 28, Elizabeth opened the first American Catholic orphanage and parish school

and is the first American-born saint.

Great things often start small. What little thing can you do for God and others today?

Ten Martyrs

Blessed Miguel Agustín Pro, S.J.

Pro was imprisoned and executed in 1927 during an era of government persecution in Mexico. Falsely charged and facing a firing squad, Pro forgave his persecutors and stretched out his arms in the form of a cross.

Find a way to forgive someone who has wronged you.

Blessed Charles de Foucauld

Foucauld led a dissolute life before becoming a hermit in the Algerian desert and serving the local tribespeople. He was martyred during a rebellion.

How can you respond to God's invitation to find a better way to live and to serve?

Saint Lawrence Ruiz

Lawrence Ruiz, a Filipino member of a Dominican missionary team in Japan, was martyred in 1637 during a persecution of Japanese Christians. He was the first Filipino to be canonized.

What challenge confronts you today, and how can you respond faithfully?

Dorothy Stang, S.N.D. deN.

In 2005, 73-year-old Sister Dorothy Stang was murdered in the Brazilian Amazon where she had worked as a tireless advocate for landless peasants since the early 1970s.

Faithfulness over the long haul is not easy. Pray for perseverance in your own commitments.

Blessed Titus Brandsma, O. Carm.

Brandsma was a Dutch Carmelite priest and vigorous critic of Nazism. Arrested and sent to the Dachau concentration camp, he was a source of consolation to other prisoners. He was tortured, and murdered by lethal injection.

Pray for courage to be a faithful witness in times of trial.

The Trappist Martyrs of Tibhirine, Algeria

These Trappist monks were revered by Muslims in Algeria because of their prayerful example and their resolve to stay and serve during a time of violent unrest. In 1996, seven of the monks were martyred.

How can you be a witness for peace in a world filled with violence?

Saints Perpetua and Felicity



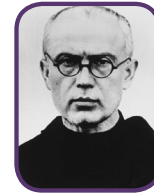
Perpetua, a 22-year-old nursing mother, was martyred in Carthage in 203 for refusing to renounce her faith.

Her co-martyr and servant, Felicity, was an expectant mother.

Mothers make tremendous sacrifices. Thank your own mother, whether living or deceased, for her sacrifices.

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Saint Maximilian Kolbe, O.F.M. Conv.



Kolbe, a Franciscan openly critical of Nazism after the German invasion of Poland, was arrested in 1941 and sent to

Auschwitz. He voluntarily died in place of another man condemned to death.

The word "compassion" means to "suffer with" another. Walk a mile in the shoes of someone who is hurting today.

Saint Isaac Jogues, S.J.

Saint Isaac Jogues of mission work: "Our single endeavor should be to give ourselves to the work and to be faithful to [God] and not to spoil his work by our shortcomings."

Take a moment to focus on some personal shortcoming you would like to change. Take a step in that direction today.

Saint Óscar Arnulfo Romero



At great personal risk, Archbishop Romero spoke out against violations of human rights and on behalf of the vic-

tims of the Salvadoran civil war. He was martyred as he raised the consecrated host during a Mass.

Sometimes faith calls upon us to take a risk. Ask yourself if you are playing it too safe in living your faith in the world.

Ten Little-Known Holy Ones

Saint Jeanne Jugan

Jeanne Jugan (1792–1879), founder of the Little Sisters of the Poor, was nearly 50 before she was confident of God’s plan for her.

Don’t be discouraged by your own uncertainty. Make each day a valuable next step.

Saint Benedict Labré

Benedict Labré (1748–1783) longed to be a monk but after several unsuccessful attempts realized he was meant to spend his life as a pilgrim devoted to praying at holy shrines.

Psalm 94 tells us: “For God will not reject his people.” Remember that when others reject you.

Venerable Pierre Toussaint



Pierre Toussaint (1766–1853) has been described as a one-man St. Vincent de Paul Society. Surviving

slavery and discrimination, Toussaint became much sought after by rich and poor alike for his wise counsel, humility, and unrelenting charity.

Adversities can be a motivation to help others rather than an excuse to fail.

Venerable Matthew Talbot

A preteen alcoholic, Matthew Talbot (1856–1925) vowed to get sober at age 28 and then spent the rest of his life offering his time and money to help others in need.

Despair led Michael Talbot to God. Pray for the same grace in your hour of need.

Saint Josephine Bakhita, F.D.C.C.

From Sudanese slave to Italian Canossian sister to history-making saint, Josephine Bakhita (1869–1947) refused to let others keep her from the path to which she knew she was called.

Commitment such as Saint Bakhita’s takes clarity and steadfastness. Make sure you are clear-eyed when you make a promise today. Then keep your word.

Blessed Solanus Casey, O.F.M.Cap.

Solanus Casey (1870–1957) ministered to thousands of people who came to the Capuchin Franciscan monastery where he served as porter and counselor.

Where do you find wise advice? Seek it most especially when you don’t think you need it.

“Thank God ahead of time.”

Solanus Casey, O.F.M.Cap.

Venerable Félix Varela

Father Félix Varela (1788–1853) escaped from Havana after he was condemned to death for promoting the abolition of slavery in Cuba. As a parish priest in New York, Varela came to the aid of Irish immigrants facing ethnic and religious discrimination.

Who could use your aid in their battle against unjust treatment?

Saint Sharbel Makhluf



The Lebanese monk Sharbel Makhluf (1828–1898) chose to devote his life to solitary prayer and spiritual reading. He

found great inspiration in Thomas à Kempis’ *Imitation of Christ*.

Include spiritual reading in your daily prayer routine.

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Saint Alphonsus Rodriguez, S.J.

Alphonsus Rodriquez (1531–1617), revered spiritual advisor, became a Jesuit brother and the community’s doorkeeper after the deaths of his wife and children.

As he answered the door, Alphonsus would say, “I’m coming, Lord.” Try answering your door, phone, or e-mail with that same faith-filled attitude.

Saint Joseph of Cupertino, O.F.M.

Known as the “Flying Friar,” Joseph of Cupertino (1603–1663) was ordained a Franciscan and from that point on he reportedly experienced a remarkable series of ecstasies and supernatural events, including frequent levitation while he celebrated Mass.

Try defying the gravity of your spiritual burdens through contemplative prayer.