

Messenger of Truth

"Holding forth the Word of Life" (Phil. 2:16)

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Saints

"The only thing different between sinners and saints is one is forgiven and the other ain't." – George Jones

"The saints are the sinners who keep on trying." – Robert Louis Stevenson

"Saints can spring from any soil." – John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*

"The Scriptures were written, not to make us astronomers, but to make us saints." – Matthew Henry

"Christ bears with the saints' imperfections; well may the saints one with another." – William Gurnall

On September 4, 2016, "Mother Theresa", a noted Catholic nun was declared a saint in a canonization mass by Pope Francis at the Vatican. The Pope declared her venerated before "the whole church."

There are two requirements that stand out in the canonization process. One, the person considered must have lived "a heroically virtuous life." Second, a miracle must be attributed to them. And if that is not enough, a second miracle must also have been performed.

The concept of Sainthood in Catholicism is markedly different than the concept of a saint in Scripture. Paul used this term in Phil. 4:21, "Greet every *saint* in Christ Jesus. The brethren who are with me greet you."

There are examples also of the plural usage. As Paul penned his greeting in 1 Corinthians, he opened by saying, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints..." (1 Cor. 1:2). "All the saints greet you, but especially those who are of Caesar's household" (Phil. 4:22). "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse" (Col. 1:2).

What is interesting is that the usage of the term *saint* was a reference to every Christian and not to some select Christians. Nor is there any reference at any time of a canonization service; or the qualification that two miracles must be attributed to each saint.

In addition, it is troubling to venerate one individual over another. Scripture states, "Then Peter opened his mouth and said: "In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality (respect of persons). But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (Acts 10:34-35).

According to Scripture, which is clearly of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17), every Christian is a saint. No, it does not suggest they are better, or that they have lived a "heroically virtuous life," or even that they have performed miracles. No, what it does indicate, is that they have placed their faith and trust in Jesus Christ and have obeyed His heavenly commands to become a Christian.