

TIMELY TOPICS



DIOCESE OF COLUMBUS, OFFICE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND CATECHESIS

Community of Saints: "Savoring the Mysteries" Part IV

Our ongoing *Mystagogy* explores the presence of the **Community of Saints** throughout the Easter Vigil. Two key symbols in the Vigil that sometimes are overlooked is the presence and important role of the **assembled community**, and the **communion of saints** as called upon in the Litany.

In the Service of Light, the flame is passed from the Paschal candle to the assembly; the lighted candles of the community illuminate the church and symbolize **the way faith is passed from person to person**.

In the Liturgy of the Word, the readings tell the story of the Israelites being formed into the **People of God** and the twists and turns of that covenant relationship. It is *our* history, too – **the roots from which our Christian faith grows**.

As we begin the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation and the Rite of Reception, we sing/pray the **Litany of Saints**. We call upon all those wise and holy people who have gone before us, asking them to pray for us and especially for those about to become full members of our Catholic Christian community.



"Mary's Mantle" by Sr. Thoma Swanson, OP. Used with Permission from the Dominican Sisters of Peace.

Often, the names of saints of local interest and of the patron saints of those coming to the sacraments are inserted, if not already included.

The Sacraments of Initiation and the Rite of Reception remind us that these gifts are not only for the individual persons, but for the entire Church. People are baptized/received into the **universal Church**, not just into the church of this diocese or city, or this particular parish.

Near the end of the Litany, the assembly's response shifts from "Pray for us" to "**Lord, save your people**" and concludes with "Lord, hear our prayer." *Me* and *my* are replaced with the plural forms of us, *our* and *your people*. We pray as the **People of God**. And as members of the **Communion of Saints**, living and dead, we welcome our new sisters and brothers.✠

Activities for every age

- ✠ The above could be done with high school and adult groups. Invite people to share with the group the name of one person who is/was very important in their lives, and why.
- ✠ With younger learners, ask them to research their patron saint—or to choose one, and research that person—and report on him/her with a drawing, poem, written/oral report, etc.
- ✠ With the youngest, ask them to write their name in big letters on a paper and then decorate their names with colors and images of things important to them (a pet, a pair of ballet slippers, a soccer ball, etc.). On a wall or bulletin board, arrange all the names in a circle. Put the name of "Jesus" in the middle of the circle, to show how we all are joined in Christ.

Inside this issue

In-service	2
Correlation to Certification Standards, the Course of Study, & the Six Tasks of Catechesis	2
Resources	2

Community of Saints: In Service

Supplies: Create a Book of Saints: using a small, spiral notebook, lined or unlined. divide it into 12 sections, each one headed with the name of a month. On the first page, title the notebook, “*Our Book of Saints*” (Perhaps someone with an artistic bent could decorate the cover and add the title to it).

Have on hand a copy of the *Litany of Saints*. Click on link or go to any missal/missalette/book of common prayer. Ahead of time, ask two/three people to be ready to read the *Litany* aloud, in turn.

Begin: by inviting participants to set aside any papers, pens, etc. and enter into a moment of silence. Ask the group to call to mind the people in their lives that they both pray *for* and pray *to*, ask the group to listen carefully to the names and then have the volunteers read the *Litany* aloud. At the point where the *Litany* shifts from naming saints to the general petitions, the readers pause. Invite participants to add names before concluding with the remainder of the *Litany*.

Introduce the “*Our Book of Saints*”. Announce that it will be kept in the staff-room/classroom/meeting room, on a prayer-table or in some way set aside in an accessible place. Participants are invited to add to the book as they wish. Find the month, write the day in the left margin; then add the names of favorite canonized saints, of holy people living and dead, of deceased persons.

The Book is a reminder that we all are a part of God’s people; and we are joined, generation on generation, across time and space in the **Communion of Saints** ✕

Correlation to Certification Standards and the Religion Course of Study

National Certification Standards for Lay Ecclesial Ministers

Standard III: Catholic Theology 3.1, 3.3.4, 3.4, 3.21 PCL

Religion Course of Study

Task I Knowledge of the Faith: E. Christian Thought and Culture.

Resources

[Litany of Saints](#): can also be found in most missals, missalettes, and books of common prayer

www.americancatholic.org/ you can sign up to receive daily e-mails on the lives of the saints

<http://www.ewtn.com/saintsHoly> lists saints in alphabetical order and by feast day

www.fisheaters.com/saintsart.html lists common symbols of the saints in art

http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/index_saints_en.html provides a list of saints canonized during John Paul II’s pontificate. Pope John Paul II canonized 482 individuals and over 1320 blessed—the most of any pontiff to date.