

Sainthood

Jesus Christ: Yesterday, Today, and Forever ~

On Saturday, September 7, Pope Leo will canonize two “young” saints, Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlos Acutis (the first millennial to be declared a saint). Their canonization next Sunday (enrollment in the canon of the Church’s saints) gives me an opportunity to write about sanctity and the process by which one is actually declared a saint. Before I do that though, I want to draw our attention to the youth of these two saints. Pier was twenty-four at the time of his death in 1925 while Carlos was only fifteen at the time of his death in 2006.

People are not born holy, innocent yes, but holiness speaks to one’s communion with God and living the virtues. Two things that are learned and are practiced as we age. Many people never learn or practice them. Blesseds Pier and Carlos made the decision at very young ages to be holy, that is to say, to live united to God at all times and to live virtuously. This decision of course is extremely rare, as most young people just want to please themselves in the moment, as do most old people. But because of this fervent desire in Pier and Carlos, and their persistence in it, they were able to make great progress in the spiritual life in a relatively short period of time. This is true for anyone else who tries.

The two things that are so remarkable for me about these two is their young age, but more importantly, the generation they were born into, yet still striving to be a saint. I can understand it when reading about a young saint from the middle ages when almost everyone was religious and being a priest, monk, or nun was a normal, natural thing for one to consider and many pursued. But these two were from the godless 20th Century, where giving one’s life in witness to Jesus Christ is **not** a normal, natural thing to do.

The other thing that catches me about these two is just how “normal” they were. Although Carlos was called the “God geek” by his peers, neither of them looked or acted like geeks. Rather, they were normal, healthy, attractive young men. Being godly can be cool if you don’t worry about what others might think of you while you put your screens down, pray, read religious books, attend Mass, go to Confession regularly, and help others in Christ. A great witness to those of us in this generation.

Here follows is a brief biography of Pier and Carlos, followed by a brief synopsis of the process by which one is eventually declared a saint.

May Almighty God Bless You,



Fr. Thomas Nathe

Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati / EWTN News
<https://ewtn.co.uk/article-breaking-carlo-acutis-to-be-canonized-sept-7-with-pier-giorgio-frassati/>

Pier Giorgio Frassati: ‘To the heights’ of holiness



Pier Giorgio Frassati, who died at the age of 24 in 1925, is also beloved by many today for his enthusiastic witness to holiness that reaches “to the heights.”

The young man from the northern Italian city of Turin was an avid mountaineer and Third Order Dominican known for his charitable outreach.

Born on Holy Saturday, April 6, 1901, Frassati was the son of the founder and director of the Italian newspaper La Stampa. At the age of seventeen, he joined the St. Vincent de Paul Society and dedicated much of his spare time to taking care of the poor, the homeless, and the sick as well as demobilized servicemen returning from World War I.

Frassati was also involved in the Apostleship of Prayer and Catholic Action. He obtained permission to receive daily Communion.

On a photograph of what would be his last climb, Frassati wrote the phrase “Verso L’Alto,” which means “to the heights.” This phrase has become a motto for Catholics inspired by Frassati to strive for the summit of eternal life with Christ.

Frassati died of polio on July 4, 1925. His doctors later speculated that the young man had caught polio while serving the sick.

John Paul II, who beatified Frassati in 1990, called him a “man of the eight beatitudes,” describing him as “entirely immersed in the mystery of God and totally dedicated to the constant service of his neighbor.”

Carlo Acutis: the first millennial saint

Carlo Acutis, an Italian computer-coding teenager who died of cancer in 2006, is known for his great devotion to the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist.

He became the first millennial to be beatified by the Catholic Church 2020 and is widely popular among Catholics, particularly youth. Known for his deep faith and digital savvy, he used his computer-coding skills to draw attention to Eucharistic miracles around the world.

Sainthood



His miracles' exhibit, featuring more than one hundred documented miracles involving the Eucharist throughout history, has since traveled to thousands of parishes across five continents.

The Vatican formally recognized a second miracle attributed to Acutis' intercession on May 23, 2024. The case involved the healing of 21-year-old Valeria Valverde of Costa Rica, who sustained a serious brain injury in a bicycle accident while studying in Florence in 2022. She was not expected to survive but recovered after her mother prayed for Acutis' intercession at his tomb in Assisi.

Born in London in 1991 and raised in Milan, Acutis attended daily Mass from a young age and was passionate about the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Shortly after his first Communion at the age of seven, Carlo told his mother: "To always be united to Jesus: This is my life plan." Carlo called the Eucharist "my highway to heaven," and he did all in his power to make the real presence known. His witness inspired his parents to return to practicing the Catholic faith and his Hindu au pair [nanny] to convert and be baptized.

Many of Carlo's classmates, friends, and family members testified to the Vatican how he brought them closer to God. He is remembered for saying, "People who place themselves before the sun get a tan; people who place themselves before the Eucharist become saints."

Shortly before his death, Acutis offered his suffering from cancer "for the pope and for the Church" and expressed a desire to go "straight to heaven."

Known as a cheerful and kind child with a love for animals, video games, and technology, Acutis' life has inspired documentaries, digital evangelization projects, and the founding of schools in his name. His legacy continues to resonate strongly with a new generation of Catholics.

The Step-by-Step Guide to How a Person Becomes a Canonized Saint [Profoundly Abridged]

<https://www.ncregister.com/blog/how-does-a-person-become-a-canonized-saint>

When the Church declares holy people to be saints, we are assured they are in heaven and eager to intercede for us.

Short or long, the steps to sainthood follow a definite route, with all roads to it leading to and from Rome. These steps on the way to declaring a person a saint have no set time limit. For example, Blessed Margaret of Castello died in 1320, was beatified in 1609, and finally canonized by Pope Francis in

2021 – 701 years after her death! He waived the need for a second miracle using this procedure, which is called "equivalent" canonization. Let's look at the steps leading to someone being declared a saint, dictating for certain they are in heaven with the Lord.

Grassroots Devotion

The deceased must have had a "fame for holiness." Do the faithful speak of these people and their exemplary lives, positive influence, apostolic fruitfulness, and edifying deaths? To make sure their reputation for sanctity is enduring, the official process of looking into their cause for canonization can't begin until five years after they die.

The Diocesan Phase

A petitioner — usually a religious order or the bishop of the diocese where the person died — can petition Rome to start the cause for canonization. A postulator is appointed to collect documents and testimonies about the life and holiness of the possible saint-to-be who at this step is named a "Servant of God." This step aims to confirm the person's heroic virtues — with emphasis on "heroic," meaning well above average.

Off to Rome

When everything is collected and the bishop approves, the results are sent to Rome, to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. A theological commission studies and votes on whether or not the Servant of God can proceed to the next step. If so, they then receive the title "Venerable."

On to Beatification

The next step on the road to sainthood is beatification. If the candidate is a martyr for the faith, he or she is immediately made a "Blessed." Others need a miracle recognized as happening through their posthumous intercession. If the congregation approves the miracle, they send the results to the Holy Father, who authorizes the beatification. The saint-in-waiting is beatified and called "Blessed."

Another Giant Step

The cause then moves toward the final step of canonization and the title of "Saint."

Necessary for this step is one additional miracle that happens **after the beatification**. The requirements are the same as for the first miracle, and the miracle must be attributed to the intercession of the Blessed. If everything passes the committees, the results are presented to the Holy Father, who then makes the final decision about declaring this particular man or woman to be a saint and worthy of public veneration by the whole Church.