

Angels and Saints:

A Biblical Guide to Friendship with God's Holy Ones

By Scott Hahn

Introduction

1. What is meant by the statement that the Church is a perfect society?

Part I

Chapter 1: Incident in Assisi: The Science of the Saints

1. What are your silent fears?

Chapter 2: The Only Saint

1. How was the word “holy” used before Christ? What about after? (pgs. 30-32)
2. What do you think the story of the Exodus tells us about sanctity? (pgs. 38-40)

3. What does it mean to be saved from our sins versus being saved for sonship? (pgs. 40-41)
4. What is the significance of the change from covenant to communion with God? (pgs. 42-43)
5. How do we as Christians tend toward trying to live alone with God? Does this work? (pgs. 43-44)
6. Do you see yourself as a "holy one" right now? How does that change your perspective? (pg. 44)

Chapter 3: For All the Saints

1. Have you ever thought of Catholicism as lonely? Can you see how others might see it as such? How can we change that? (pg. 45)

2. “Nothing is more difficult than to realize that... all the millions who live or have lived...Every one of those souls still lives.” Is this true? (pg. 47)

Chapter 4: What Do Saints Do?

1. Read Luke 16:19-31. What have you thought of this passage previously? What has Scott Hahn's explanation of this incident helped you understand sainthood? (pgs. 55-58)
2. Why doesn't asking for the intercession of saints take anything away from us properly worshipping God or His importance in our life? (pgs. 61-64)

Chapter 5: Talking about My Veneration

1. What should be our attitude toward the saints? (pg. 65)
2. “Grace does not destroy nature, but rather builds upon it, completes it, perfects it, and elevates it.” What does this mean in light of venerating the saints? (pgs. 65-66)
3. As Catholics, how do we distinguish how we treat God versus how we treat the saints? (pgs. 65-68)

4. Why bother having saints at all? (pgs. 69-71)
5. How does the concept of patronage help explain saints and their intercession? (pgs. 69-71)
6. Where else in our readings have we seen an inversion of our expectations when it comes to following Christ? (pgs. 70-71)
7. What relics do we have in our church? Where are they? (pgs. 71-72)
8. How do Christians treat the dead versus how other religions treat the dead? (pgs. 71-73)
9. "We know that the human race has a mortality rate of one hundred percent. Yet we also know that the human race has an immortality rate of one hundred percent. The idea has profound and far-reaching consequences.." What are these consequences? (pg. 73)

Chapter 6: A Gathering of Angels

1. What are the two things that early Christian preachers and commentators have concluded? (pg. 75)
2. Reflect on Genesis 1:3. Now read Scott Hahn explaining St. Augustine's interpretation of this scripture passage on page 76. What do you think?
3. "In the Old Testament, the human race presented a weak defense against evil, and so even the good angels had to rule with a heavy hand, like babysitters entrusted with the care of unruly children. How does this explain the treatment given to those that did bad things in the Old Testament versus how it was treated with the coming of Christ in the New Testament? (pg. 77)
4. There are many instances of a hierarchy in heaven. Does this hold true on earth? If so, why? (pgs. 79-80)

Part II

Chapter 7: St. Michael and the Angels

1. "The great theologians have argued that each angel is not only a separate person, but a species unto himself, since species in the material realm are categorized by physical difference, which angels lack." What do you think this means?(pg. 83)
2. How long has St. Michael been recognized? (pg. 84)

3. Hahn mentions Jesus' temptation in Mark 1:13 and his agony in the Garden of Gethsemane in Luke 22:43. Why, if Jesus is God, would he turn to the angels for help? (pgs. 85-86)

4. Reflect on "Ponder in your Heart" on pgs. 87-88. What does this help you understand about angels?

Chapter 8: Holy Moses

1. Have you ever considered Moses as a man of contemplation? How does his example change the way you view action and contemplation in your faith life? How? (pgs. 89-96)

2. Ponder in your heart: How does Moses' desire to see the face of God resonate for us now? Do we want to see the face of God? What do we look for in our busy lives? (pgs. 96-97)

Chapter 9: St. Paul, Son of God

Justification (from CCC Glossary): The gracious action of God which frees us from sin and communicates "the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ" (Rom 3:22). Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man (1987-1989).

1. Does the description of Saul's life and beliefs on pages 100-101 before his encounter with Christ change the way you view Saul/Paul and why he acted the way he did toward early followers of Christ?
2. How was Saul's expectation of deliverance different from the deliverance that God had planned? (pgs. 101-102)
3. Ponder in your heart: Have you ever stopped to think of why St. Paul always addresses his letters in the way he does? Should we take notice of this? If these letters are addressed not only to these communities but also to us, what does that mean for us today? (pgs. 105-106)

Chapter 10: St. Ignatius of Antioch, God's Wheat

1. What does Ignatius' silence on himself say about him and his faith? Do you know anyone like this? Is there a model to be followed here in our own lives? (pgs. 107-109)
2. Based on St. Ignatius' letters, how would the early Church have been described? Have these foundations changed through the centuries? (pgs. 109-112)
3. "Ignatius became a visiting celebrity in all the eastern churches, simply because he was on his way to martyrdom. His condemnation conferred upon him a sort of universal authority. Christians everywhere recognized him as a living saint." Does this attitude toward people still exist? (pg. 112)

4. "In his life, in his letters, and in his death Ignatius left us a vivid and permanent record of what it meant to be a Christian in the first and second centuries—and a precious reminder of what it should mean in the twenty-first." What does it mean to be a Christian today? (pg. 113)

5. Ponder in your heart: If you were called to martyrdom, would you be able to react, especially to your friends and family, the way that Ignatius of Antioch did in his letter? (pgs.114-115)

Chapter 11: St. Irenaeus of Lyons, Blessed Peacemaker

1. St. Irenaeus "read widely in the works of these new movements, but he read the new works with eyes that had been trained by old Polycarp, whose own eyes had been trained by the Apostles." What is both the danger and benefit of reading what might be considered controversial books? As Catholics, how should we approach the reading of such materials? Why? (pgs. 119-120)

2. Why did Irenaeus teach that Scripture alone was not a guarantee of faith? (pgs. 121-123)

3. Ponder in your heart: What does understanding and agreeing with Apostolic Succession have to do with us becoming saints? (pgs. 123-125)

Chapter 12: St. Jerome and His Circle

1. Was it surprising to know that women played such an important role in his life, especially his prayer life? Do you think that this is a well known fact? Why or why not? (pgs. 129-132)
2. Ponder in your heart: Do any of these reasons mentioned against asking for intercession from the saints still come up today? How do you feel about St. Jerome's answers? (pgs. 132-134)

Chapter 13: St. Monica and Her Son

1. How does Monica's life mirror your own? How can her patronage help you in your life?
2. What does Monica's influence on her son say about the influence of one good person to those around them? (pgs. 140-141)
3. Ponder in your heart: "They [the saints] conquered the world not by resisting it, but by dying." What does this mean in light of John 17: 15-19? (pg. 141)

Chapter 14: St Thomas Aquinas, Biblical Theologian

1. "Nature, since the fall, cannot be truly understood apart from Scriptures." What does this mean? (pg. 147)

2. What are the four types of law and what are their purposes according to St. Thomas Aquinas? (pgs. 148-150)
3. Does the explanation of the Old versus the New Testament change the way you see the differences between the two. How does this relate to St. Thomas Aquinas' view of law? (pg. 149)
4. Ponder in your heart: What is the afterlife of a saint like? (pgs. 151-153)

Chapter 15: St. Therese of Lisieux, Saint of Little Things

1. "Therese, the love you bore God...was truly worthy of him." Why were these words so intimidating to Hahn? Do they intimidate you? Why or why not? (pg. 156)
2. How do we treat children that misbehave in Mass? How do we treat children with lofty goals and desires? How should we treat them? (pg. 157-158)
3. How can a different approach to life bring us closer to God? (pg. 159)

4. Have you ever had a reason to doubt God's desire to lead you safely? How do you feel about totally giving everything to God? (pg. 160)

5. "Hers is a 'little way,' but a way that we all could walk. If only we let go of our pretenses of adulthood—control, self-determination, self-pity, and bluster." What pretenses do we need to get rid of, and how do we do it? (pg. 161)

6. Ponder in your heart: Does society allow us to rejoice in our smallness? How can we do this as St. Therese did so we can better become true children of God? (pgs. 161-162)

Chapter 16: St. Maximilian Kolbe, Saint of Auschwitz

1. "Such sanctity is not built in a day." Is this how we often view saints? What, have you found, is the truth? (pg. 164)

2. What do we do with rambunctious youth? How should we guide the troubled youth that we encounter? (pg. 164)

3. "Maximilian dreamed big." Do we dream big, especially when it comes to our faith? Is it enough to just dream big? What did St. Maximilian Kolbe do when he "dreamed big"? (pgs. 165-166)

4. Ponder in your heart: Do we live in a time of negation of faith? How can we, like Maximilian Kolbe, win victory through faith and love in a world of hate and pain? (pgs. 169-170)

Chapter 17: St. JoseMaria Escriva, Saint in the Street

1. How can we practically remind ourselves and others that we are “other Christs”? (pgs. 178-179)
2. Ponder in your heart: How do we sanctify the ordinary in our lives, or is it already sanctified? If it is sanctified, then how do we respond? (pgs. 176-177, 179-181)

Chapter 18: Queen of All Saints, Mother of the Church

1. What is our salvation? (pg. 184)
2. What does it mean to be holy? (pg. 184)
3. How can we call the “woman” in revelation both Mary and the Church? (pgs. 184-186)

4. Have you ever thought of Mary as a martyr? (pg. 188)

5. How does Mary and devotion to her bring us closer to Christ, and to sainthood? (pgs. 189-192)

Last Words: Family First

1. Do you have “notional assent” or “real assent”? What can we do to get us from one to the other? (pgs. 194-195)

2. Is sainthood an impossible goal for us? How has your view of sainthood changed with this book?