



Growing Closer to Your Saint(s)

By Joanita M. Nellenbach, OFS

Picturing Your Saint

Find a photograph or painting. One way is to go online, type “images St. (name).” Pictures will appear. Print one you like. Looking at your saint can be helpful for meditation and during conversations with him or her.

Conversation

Yes, converse with your saint. Talk about anything. You can even ask questions, for which answers may come later. If you like, write (perhaps in a journal) what you said to your saint and what comes into your mind that might be your saint speaking to you.

Invitations

Invite your saint(s) to join you for walks, quiet relaxation, when you pray throughout the day, on any occasion.

6 Ways to Foster a Relationship with Your Patron Saint

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<https://www.goodcatholic.com/six-ways-to-deepen-your-relationship-with-your-patron-saint/>

Cultivating a deeper relationship with your patron saint is an important way to grow in your faith and in communion with the Church of the past and the present.

These intimate friendships help connect us to heaven, even as we struggle down here below. It is a great consolation to know that we have the heavenly court urging us on and interceding for us before the throne of God!

Here are six ways to deepen your relationship with your special patron saints:

1. Ask your patron saint to pray for you — every day.

Find special prayers to your patron saint, or look up prayers written by them, and pray these prayers daily.

Your patron saint wants to “pray you into heaven.” As you go about your day, ask for their intercession, that you might imitate the qualities you admire in them, desire to possess the virtues they exemplify, and endure the details and trials of your life with love and patience like they did.

You can also keep prayer cards, statues, framed prints, or other devotional items featuring your saint’s image in your home. These serve as a reminder of their virtues, holiness, and special gifts. If possible, wear their saint medal, and have it blessed by a priest.

Just as we ask our friends in the world for their prayers, we can ask our brothers and sisters in heaven to pray for us. Since they are standing before the throne of God, their prayers are even more powerful. Talk to them as you would to a friend sitting right beside you.

2. Read about your special saint.

Read good books written about, or by, your favorite saints. We grow in our relationship with a friend by spending quality time together; this is true for your relationship with your special saints, too. Ask your saint to help you learn about their life through written accounts. Talk to your patron saint as you read about them.

As you learn more about your patron saints, you will grow in appreciation for their virtues, struggles, and character. You will enter into a more intimate relationship with them as you see how they grew in holiness. Then you will feel more inspired to pray, asking for their intercession in the day-to-day events of your own life.

3. Celebrate the feast day of your patron saint.

Nine days prior to their feasts, begin a novena to your favorite saint(s). Many of these novenas can easily be found online.

Fasting precedes feasting. It is a traditional practice to fast on the day prior to a feast day, and to feast on the day of. So, on the day before your saint’s feast day, consider fasting (from food or from other things) to keep a holy vigil in anticipation of the day.

Even making small gestures of sacrifice to help keep the day holy will bring graces and deepen your relationship and communion with your saint. Offer these up in thanksgiving for the graces the saint has helped obtain for you — past, present, and future.

Consider going to Mass on your saint’s feast day as well and offer that Mass in thanksgiving for their intercession.

Celebrate that evening with your family by serving a special meal or dessert and telling the story of the saint you are celebrating! Honor the saint and give thanks for the consolations they provide you.

4. Visit the shrines of your favorite patron saints.

There are many shrines in the USA that most people do not even know exist. You can often venerate the relics of your saints at these shrines. Do a little research and find which special saint of yours may have a shrine near enough to visit. You could even make this an annual pilgrimage.

When you visit these shrines, you can bring your intentions to these saints in an intimate way. Ask others if you can take their special prayer intentions with you on your pilgrimage and present them to your patron saint.

5. Schedule a retreat on or around the feast day of your patron saint.

The intercession of the saints is especially powerful on the date the Church celebrates their liturgical feast. Ask that saint to help you grow spiritually and to receive the graces God wants to give you. We often take time off from work to plan a vacation around a special holiday, so why not do the same around the feast day of your favorite heavenly intercessor?

Ask your patron saint to intercede for you and to help you make a good retreat. Bring books or materials written by or about your saint if possible. A silent retreat, in which you spend time with God and with your patron saint, can be a rich and fruitful experience.

6. Share your saint's story with others.

Tell friends and family and coworkers your stories of saintly intercession and ask to hear theirs. Share special prayers and novenas to your saints.

Suggest your saints to others in their times of need, especially if your saint is the patron of their specific cause.

You can even keep holy cards and other devotionals on hand to give away when the Holy Spirit prompts you to do so.

Final Thoughts

By following these suggestions, you can work alongside the Holy Spirit to promote devotion to your patron saints in your own heart and the hearts of those around you. The Communion of Saints binds together the blessed in heaven, the holy souls in purgatory, and the faithful on earth.

The saints are a beacon in a darkening world, lighting the way for us all. Enrich your faith by deepening your friendship with your patron saints. They have so much to teach us.

We share in the graces won by the saints and they share in the Lord's desire for us to reach heaven. They are one of the greatest treasures of our Church, and they are our inheritance!

