

The other day my son asked me to help him with a project on saints that he was asked to do for his religion class. He had to choose three saints and write about them, and he said there were so many of them that he wanted to know if I thought the ones he had chosen were good picks. I suggested we go down the long and distinguished list of saints and see who was who.Saints, as some of you may know, are those people who were persecuted and martyred for their Christian faith, or who lived their lives generally as holy people. Those who through their extraordinary lives of virtue, upon entering Heaven, are believed to share in what is called the Beatific Vision, a face-to-face experience of the presence of God, and are thereby able to provide assistance to us mortals when we ask through prayers directed at them. My son was amazed to see how many there are and that there is a patron saint for practically every area of life you can think of — St. Jude, patron saint of desperate cases; St. Christopher, patron saint of travelers, St. Mark, patron saint of lawyers (what? lawyers?) — and the list goes on.

To some people this might seem almost comical, I know. But I must tell you that I believe in them. I am a devout follower of some of them and carry their prayer cards around in my wallet. Sort of a security blanket deal. I have friends who do as well. Recently, one of them was in dire need of selling her home, and began praying to the patron saint of this cause. She prayed and prayed and prayed, but became discouraged when time went by and her prayers seemed to be to no avail. It is quite frustrating when we think our prayers are falling on deaf ears. I've been there. And as I told my friend on a day when she was experiencing that frustration, I am still waiting to see the results I want from some of my petitions…the results "I" want…which lack thereof could only mean they are not the results God intends. Because in the end, our beloved saints are merely interceders who, like us, have to plead our cases to a higher power. This sometimes takes a long time, and even then, they may be turned down by Him for a better result for us.

So why pray to the saints then? Well, why not? Don't you ask friends, sometimes even strangers, for help? I for one like believing there is someone besides me, someone out there in the spiritual world, pleading my case and pulling for me. Listen, life gets rough sometimes, and if you believed there were saints out there who'd be more than willing to work for your

cause, you'd pray to Santa Barbara, San Lazaro, y la Caridad del Cobre if you could.

Although we are strong in our faith in God the Creator, the omnipresent, omnipotent, all knowing, all wise and most merciful Heavenly Father, and through our prayers we intend to give our troubles to Him, some of us choose to call upon the saints as well for assistance. After all, they are mentioned in the Bible, and for the faithful, they are there for the taking. In time, my friend's prayers were answered; allowing her to move to the next chapter of her life, but it took much faith and patience on her part. It is said that patience is a virtue. But darn, how much patience we gotta have to have patience! Especially when invoking those Interceders.

"God creates out of nothing. Wonderful you say. Yes, to be sure, but he does what is still more wonderful: he makes saints out of sinners." – Soren Kierkegaard

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