

# St. Ignatius Catholic School

# Faith for Families

May 2023

An outreach of the School Board's Catholic Identity Committee



## We belong in LOVE...

Have you ever thought about becoming a saint? Oftentimes, when we ask our children what they want to be when they grow up, we hear the familiar professions of doctor, soldier, lawyer, teacher, baseball player, etc.

**But what if our children's first response was that they wanted to become saints?**

Ultimately, sainthood is the goal of every Christian. Most people will respond "Yes" when asked if they want to go to heaven when they die, without the realization that everyone in heaven IS a saint.

The saints we probably think of like St. Ignatius and St. Patrick are Saints who have been "canonized." **Canonization** is the official process where the Church determines that a person is in heaven. However, we also believe that heaven is FULL of the souls of people who have died whose faith and virtue will never be recognized by canonization but have achieved the goal of heaven. They are saints with a lowercase "s" while those who have been canonized formally are Saints with a capital "S." So really, if you want to go to heaven, you also want to be a saint!

If we are really honest with ourselves, that thought can make us uncomfortable, because while Heaven and sainthood are our theoretical goals, we often think that Sainthood is unattainable, or only for the perfect. The truth is that we are all called to be saints, and with God's help, it is absolutely possible. Truly, sainthood is spending our lives loving God and loving others now, and then into eternity. Saints were real people too! Yes, many were priests or nuns during their lives, but there are also mothers and business owners, teachers, and doctors who lived lives of heroic virtue and have been recognized by the Church as Saints. At the end of our lives, at the moment that we see God face to face, all He will ask us is effectively this: "What did you do with the gifts you were given? How did you love me and how did you love others?"

This year's theme of "We Belong" is powerful through the lens of sainthood. The truth is that we belong in heaven. Saint Thérèse said, "The world is your ship, not your home." We are all on a journey and hope that heaven is our final destination. Living a saintly life on earth says, "Heaven is my goal, and I will live my life accordingly and take as many people along with me as I can." As parents, this most importantly includes our children. What a tragedy it would be if our children achieved every manner of earthly success, but did not achieve the ultimate success of heaven. While good schools and good grades are absolutely important, we need to be sure that sainthood is not an afterthought.

**Let our prayer be that we and our children seek to be Saints.**



## The Divine Mercy Message & Devotion

The message of The Divine Mercy is simple. It is that God loves us — all of us. And, He wants us to recognize that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy, and let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy. To learn more, visit [HERE](#)



# Sainthood is attainable!

As persons made in the image and likeness of God, we necessarily believe that we are made in love, and destined for love. We can, and should be saints, as well as helping our children understand that they are called to be saints as well. If we have a goal of Sainthood in mind, how we live our lives should reflect that.

As children of God, we were each created as a unique and loving thought of God. He created us in love, and our entire lives are truly a journey back to Him. Our origin and our destination are the same: communion with God, who IS love. With this in mind, our lives are truly a journey. Full of love and joy, but also heartbreak and sorrow, every circumstance of our lives has the potential to draw us nearer to Him if we allow it. As Christians, we are each called to personal holiness, which means we are to seek to love God and seek the kingdom of heaven in every circumstance of life. Also, as parents we are called to be the primary catechists of our children, a promise that we made at their baptism, to foster the seed of faith in their hearts through our example and family life. However, sometimes that's really difficult because we all have our own journeys that we're on. Sometimes the circumstances of our life make faith difficult, but never impossible. We are each called to heaven; we are all called to be saints. The Saints are not just perfect people who lived a long time ago, they are people throughout all of history, who have loved God and the people in their lives, radically and completely. Saints are those who have heaven as their goal and strive to grow closer to God every day. As a parent, we want good things for our children. Sainthood means eternity and heaven, with God, which is the greatest good we can hope for them. In order for that to happen, we must actively choose every day for a family, culture, and life that promotes this goal.

## What is a Novena and why it matters

A novena is a nine-day prayer, typically to ask God for something specific, often through the intercession of a particular saint.

The word novena comes from the Latin word novem, meaning nine. When Jesus told His disciples to gather and pray after His Ascension into heaven, the Apostles and the Blessed Mother prayed together for the nine days between Ascension and Pentecost.

[Praymorenovenas.com](http://Praymorenovenas.com) is a great resource to make praying a novena easy and convenient! Just sign up to the email list and the novena will be in your inbox each morning. They also incorporate the liturgical year, which brings up question opportunities to learn more about the beauty of our faith. For great resources to answer those questions, see below!

## Where to get big questions answered

If you're looking for answers to big questions, it can be downright scary and overwhelming to know WHERE to go to get that info. Here is a list (which is in no way comprehensive, but a great start) of sites that are both very knowledgeable and user friendly.

- [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)
- [Catholic Answers](#)
- [Ascension Presents](#)
- [St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology](#)

## What sainthood can look like in 2023

Becoming a saint doesn't have to include heroic measures (though it can!). No one's path to sainthood is exactly the same, however, they all include the same foundation of prayer and the sacraments. Sainthood occurs when grace meets habitual virtue. Here are some things your family can do to journey down the path to sainthood together.

- Make Prayer the foundation of your day! Regular and substantial conversation is necessary for all relationships, especially our relationship with God!
- Read Scripture! God speaks to us through His Word, soak it up!!
- Make Mass a priority! One of the many wonderful things about being Catholic is that Mass is available wherever you go and at many different times. It is worth the extra effort to set the example and expectation that Mass is important. So, plan around your summer activities — go to Mass at a different parish, and find a time that works! Making this time sacred and valuable to your family is necessary.
- Go to reconciliation — together! Put it on your calendar to go regularly and make it a priority. Reconciliation can be challenging for kids and adults alike. But when it comes down to it, sainthood requires humility and the opportunity to tell God we are repentant.
- Make it a habit to go to Adoration! Whether it is a holy hour every week or a quick 10-minute visit after school, quality time with Jesus in the Eucharist is ALWAYS time well spent!
- Learn from the lives of the saints — whether it is through books or podcasts, get in the habit of seeing how other people achieved sainthood. It will give you valuable insights into ways you can grow closer to Christ as well!
- Pray the Rosary and/or the Divine Mercy Chaplet as a family. Perhaps a decade every night before bed or when you get in the car first thing every day — this opportunity for quiet reflection on the life of Christ and His Mercy is transformational. May is the month of the Rosary, after all.

## Want to learn more? Come to Summer LOFT at Holy Apostles!

LOFT (Learning Our Faith Together) is a summer talk series where we will explore the Catholic faith together! Join us from 6:30–8pm on the following dates:

- June 7, 14, 21, 28
- July 12, 19, 26