

Living in the Kingdom

Lesson 5: The Communion of Saints

God's Family in Heaven and on Earth



1 Cor 12:4-26

CCC 950-953
Acts 2:42
Acts 4:32-35

CCC 954-59

Heb 12:22-23
CCC 956

Rev 5:8, 8:3
Rev 6:9-11

CCC 957
Heb 12:1

1. God has always intended us to live with him in familial love. The Church and communion of saints is his holy human family.
2. We are called to holiness in groups and cannot attain heaven alone; mutual love is the bond. Our unity gives strength; enhances faith, hope and love. If one suffers, all suffer; if one grows in holiness, all benefit.
3. "Communion" includes:
 - a. Communion in the faith;
 - b. Communion in the sacraments;
 - c. Communion of charisms;
 - d. Having everything in common, sharing spiritual and material goods;
 - e. Communion in charity.
4. Who is a "saint"? Generally, "saint" is one in a state of grace, united to God and seeking to be perfected in love. Canonized saints are those who have attained the perfection of holiness by responding to God's grace. Each person is at a different stage of sanctity; we are never to rest in the work of becoming perfect by grace.
5. The three states of the Church:
 - a. The Church militant on earth;
 - b. The Church triumphant in heaven;
 - c. The Church suffering in purgatory.
6. The union of the saints is not interrupted by death but reinforced by an exchange of spiritual goods. In our love of one another, all are united in the one family of God.
7. The **Church Militant on earth**: Jesus calls us to battle with Satan, for the sake of our own soul and also of others. We struggle to live and die in holiness to attain our final goal, God himself. We strive to love God, love our neighbor, and do as much good for others as we can.
8. Through prayer we can assist each other and get help from the saints in heaven. Through prayer and indulgences we can help those in purgatory.
9. The **Church Triumphant in Heaven**: Fully united with Christ and before the throne of grace, the saints in heaven intercede for us. Aware of what is happening on earth, they respond to our prayers and pray to God on our behalf. We are never alone but always united with them.
10. In the book of Revelation, the 24 elders and angels bring the prayers of the saints before God. Martyrs pray to God for vindication.
11. We imitate the saints in their example of holiness and charity. In devotion to them we exercise fraternal love and strengthen the union of the whole Church. Our communion with the saints joins us to Christ.

<p>1 Cor 3:13-15 Lk 16</p> <p>CCC 958 2 Mac 12:39-45 Kaddish prayer</p> <p>2 Tim 2:1-5</p> <p>CCC 769</p> <p>CCC 972</p>	<p>12. The Church Suffering in purgatory: Those who died in friendship with the Lord but without complete spotlessness undergo final purification in purgatory. They know they will see God and yearn to be purified before entering heaven. They offer their suffering in prayer on behalf of those still on earth. The rich man in Hades prays to Abraham for his brothers.</p> <p>13. Our prayers for those who have died are capable of helping them.</p> <p>14. Asking saints for their prayers is not the same as invoking them, as forbidden in Deut. 18.</p> <p>15. Asking for each other's prayers does not violate Christ's one mediation. Death does not separate the saints; love in them is complete.</p> <p>16. "I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth." (St. Thérèse de Lisieux)</p> <p>17. The Church here below is in exile, but will one day will be united in glory with our king, with each other and all the saints forever.</p> <p>18. Mary is the most perfect saint. She shines forth on earth as a sign of perfect holiness, certain hope and comfort to the pilgrim People of God.</p>
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Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think many Christians have a problem with the Communion of Saints?
2. Is the Communion of saints taught in the Bible?
3. Deuteronomy 18 forbids invoking of the dead. Doesn't this include praying to saints?
4. Why do we need to ask saints for their prayers? Can we not pray straight to Jesus?
5. Why should we pray for the dead? Are they not either saved and with the Lord (our prayers are unnecessary) or damned and in hell (our prayers are useless)?
6. Do you ever think about or feel that you are in the company of angels and saints helping you on your way to heaven?