

## "How To Become a Saint" Revelation 7:9-17 All Saints' 2024

Dear Christian Brethren,

Have you ever looked at yourself in the mirror and thought, "Me, a saint? Ha, not likely..."? I know I have. The idea of being created to be a saint can seem far-fetched when you're struggling to get through your day without losing your cool in traffic as you're stuck behind a combine or gossiping about your coworker.

But here is the thing: sainthood is not about being perfect. It is about being fully human, with all our brokenness and weaknesses, and still striving to let a little more light into the world. It is about progress, not perfection.

Think about it this way: remember that time you helped your elderly neighbour with their groceries? Or when you stayed up all night comforting a friend going through a tough time? Those moments, as small as they might seem, are glimpses of the saint you're meant to be.

We often think saints as these larger-than-life figures with halos and serene expressions. But the reality is, they were human just like us. They had bad days, made mistakes, and probably even swore when they stubbed their toes (okay, maybe not all of them, but you get the idea).

Take St. Peter, for example. This guy was supposed to be the rock of the Church, but he denied knowing Jesus three times when things got tough. Talk about a major slip-up! Yet, he went on to become one of the most important figures in Christian history. Why? Because he did not let his mistakes define him. He got back up, dusted himself off, and kept trying.

Or consider St. Augustine, who excellently prayed, "Lord, make me chaste – but not yet!" He was continually tempted and just like us. His journey to sainthood was not a straight line, but a winding path full of detours and U-turns.

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The difference? They kept showing up. They kept trying, even when it was hard. Especially when it was hard.

Being created to be a saint does not mean you have to sell all your possessions and move to a monastery (unless that's your thing, in which case, go for it!). It means recognising that there is something divine within you, a spark of goodness that has the potential to change the world around you.

It is about those small, everyday choices:

- Choosing patience when your kids are driving you up the wall
- Offering a kind word to the cashier who looks like they're having a rough day
- Forgiving someone who hurt you, even when it's the last thing you want to do
- Ask for forgiveness when you're wrong
- Be a voice of the voiceless
- Choosing to be honest even when a little white lie would be easier
- Taking time to listen, really listen, to someone who needs to be heard

These moments might not seem saintly, but they are the building blocks of a life lived with purpose and love. They are the small steps that, over time, lead us closer to the people we're meant to be.

Now, let us be real for a moment. This journey towards sainthood? It is not always going to be sunshine and rainbows. There will be days when you feel anything but saintly. Days when you lose your temper, make selfish choices, or feel like you are taking more steps backward than forward.

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I remember a time when I was stuck in a job I hated, dealing with a client who seemed to go out of his way to make my life miserable. Every day was a struggle not to tell him exactly where he could shove his unreasonable demands. Was I feeling very saintly then? Absolutely not. But looking back, I can see how that experience taught me patience, perseverance, and the importance of treating others with kindness, even when they are not extending the same courtesy to you.

The point is, these struggles are part of the journey. They are the refining fire that shapes us, challenges us, and ultimately helps us grow. The key is not to let them defeat us, but to use them as opportunities for growth and self-reflection.

And here is the best part: you are not alone on this spiritual journey. Every time we celebrate All Saints' Day, we are reminded that we are part of this big, messy, beautiful family of believers – past, present, and future. The saints are not just figures in stained glass windows; they are our cheerleaders, rooting for us as we navigate this crazy thing called life.

Think of it like a cosmic relay race. The saints who came before us ran their leg of the race, and now they are on the sidelines, cheering us on as we run ours. They are not judging us for our stumbles; they are encouraging us to keep going, because they know from experience that every step forward counts.

Here is another important thing to remember: your path to sainthood is uniquely yours. It might not look like anyone else's, and that is okay.

Maybe your version of sainthood involves being the best parent you can be, showing your kids what unconditional love looks like. Or perhaps it is about using your talents – whether that is art, music,

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writing, or even coding – to bring more beauty and truth into the world. It could be about fighting for justice in your community or simply being a consistent source of kindness in your everyday interactions.

Whatever it is, embrace it. Your journey to sainthood isn't about fitting into someone else's mold; it is about becoming the best version of yourself, the person you were created to be.

One of the most beautiful things about this journey is that it is not just about us. As we strive to become the saints we are created to be, we create ripples that extend far beyond ourselves. That act of kindness you showed a stranger? It might have been just what they needed to restore their faith in humanity. The stand you took for what's right? It could inspire others to do the same.

We may never see the full impact of our actions, but that does not make them any less significant. Every small act of love, every choice to do what's right, contributes to making the world a little bit better, a little bit brighter.

So the next time you are feeling decidedly un-saintly (like when you are elbow-deep in dirty diapers or facing a mountain of bills), remember this: you were created for something amazing. You were created to be a saint.

Not a perfect saint. Not a flawless saint. But a real, authentic, beautifully human saint who is doing their best to spread a little more love in the world.

It is a journey of a thousand small choices, a thousand opportunities to let your inner light shine. Some days you will feel like you are nailing it, and other days... well, not so much. But that's okay. That's human. And that is exactly where grace comes in.

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So, keep showing up. Keep trying. Keep loving. Because that, my friends, is what being a saint is all about. And you have got this. One day at a time, one choice at a time, you are becoming the saint you were created to be.

And that, when you really think about it, is pretty darn incredible. So, thank you, saints, for coming and sharing some time with God today. Amen.