

- One of the questions about our Catholic faith from others is: “*Why do you Catholics worship saints? You should worship God alone!*”
- Well, of course, we DO worship God alone. So many non-Catholics are victims of centuries of misinformation.
- What would be the point of worshipping a human being? Even the saints’ only power is their prayers before God.
- Yet we DO honor and venerate these our brothers and sisters who have, as St. Paul says, fought the good fight of faith and successfully finished the race... and are honored by God to spend eternity with Him.
- They are our brothers and sisters, but also our models and inspirations for us...showing us that we regular ol’ men and women have the innate potential to attain holiness as they did.
- While the practice is not specifically in the Bible, Christians have prayed for the saints’ intercession since the earliest times of Christianity...possibly even during the time of the disciples.
- We read in the book of Revelation how the saints are aware of earthly occurrences.
- And remember Jesus’ parable of the rich man and poor Lazarus? The rich man suffering in the afterlife was still concerned for his brothers still living...and asks (Saint) Abraham in Heaven that they might gain wisdom...and thus this story shows us how those who have gone before us intercede for us.
- And we ARE, after all, one body of Christ...we on earth, the souls in Purgatory (who are destined to eventual entry into Heaven), and the saints in Heaven. We are one family...one Body of Christ...with Jesus Himself as our head...all connected in faith.
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- Non-Catholics often protest: “*Paul says (1 Timothy 2:5) that there is only one mediator between God and men—the man Jesus Christ!*”
- That’s what we believe also. All the prayers of the Body—of which we and the saints are members—go through the head of the body... through Christ.

- St. Paul tell us that we must hold fast “...to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together...grows with a growth that is from God.” (Col 2:19 RSV)
- Even Mary is only human, and has no power of her own...and is absolutely dependent upon the grace of God.
- We use images simply for reminders...helping us to recall the virtues of the person depicted, just as looking at a picture of your mom or dad brings back memories.
- No one in the Church worships a hunk of plaster or marble or a painting...or even the person whom the image depicts.
- Saints’ images are just reminders of examples for us to emulate...just like a young person might have an image of an astronaut or great scientist hanging up—to constantly remind himself of his goal.
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- Yes, there IS only one mediator between God and Man, because only one has been--and IS--BOTH God and Man: Jesus Christ.
- But we are told to pray for one another, and when we pray to the saints, we simply ask them as proven friends of God to pray through Christ for us.
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- St. Paul writes: “God has so composed the body...that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ...” (1Cor 12:24-27 RSV)
- Knowing this...the saints pray for us, for they love us who are still struggling more now than ever.
- In the book of Revelation we read: “...the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints...” (Revelation 5:8), meaning that the Heavenly saints bring our prayers to God—they intercede for us with God.
- This is the essence of the communion of saints...the members of a single family supporting and loving one other.
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- So...as it says in the letter to the Hebrews: “...since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside

every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us... ” (Heb 12:1 RSV)

- ...remembering that the saints were people just like us. And if they are able to follow God with unwavering faith and devotion despite struggle, so are we.
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- Remember the story of the little boy who attended a church that had beautiful stained-glass windows.
- He was told the windows contained pictures of many of the saints.
- One day he was asked, “*What is a saint?*”
- He said eagerly, “*A saint is a person whom the light shines through!*”
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- And as Pope Clement I said: “*Follow the saints, because those who follow them will [themselves] become saints.*” ...because they followed Christ.

Reading 1

[Rv 7:2-4, 9-14](#)

I, John, saw another angel come up from the East,
holding the seal of the living God.
He cried out in a loud voice to the four angels
who were given power to damage the land and the sea,
“Do not damage the land or the sea or the trees
until we put the seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God.”
I heard the number of those who had been marked with the seal,
one hundred and forty-four thousand marked
from every tribe of the children of Israel.

After this I had a vision of a great multitude,
which no one could count,
from every nation, race, people, and tongue.
They stood before the throne and before the Lamb,
wearing white robes and holding palm branches in their hands.
They cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation comes from our God, who is seated on the throne,
and from the Lamb.”

All the angels stood around the throne
and around the elders and the four living creatures.
They prostrated themselves before the throne,
worshiped God, and exclaimed:

“Amen. Blessing and glory, wisdom and thanksgiving,
honor, power, and might
be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

Then one of the elders spoke up and said to me,
“Who are these wearing white robes, and where did they come from?”
I said to him, “My lord, you are the one who knows.”
He said to me,

“These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress;
they have washed their robes
and made them white in the Blood of the Lamb.”

Responsorial Psalm

[Ps 24:1bc-2, 3-4ab, 5-6](#)

R. (see 6) **Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**

The LORD's are the earth and its fullness;
the world and those who dwell in it.

For he founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers.

R. **Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**

Who can ascend the mountain of the LORD?
or who may stand in his holy place?

One whose hands are sinless, whose heart is clean,
who desires not what is vain.

R. **Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**

He shall receive a blessing from the LORD,
a reward from God his savior.

Such is the race that seeks him,
that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

R. **Lord, this is the people that longs to see your face.**

Reading II

[1 Jn 3:1-3](#)

Beloved:

See what love the Father has bestowed on us
that we may be called the children of God.

Yet so we are.

The reason the world does not know us
is that it did not know him.

Beloved, we are God's children now;

what we shall be has not yet been revealed.

We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him,
for we shall see him as he is.

Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure,
as he is pure.

Gospel

[Mt 5:1-12a](#)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain,
and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him.
He began to teach them, saying:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you
and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.

Rejoice and be glad,
for your reward will be great in heaven.”