



Renewing Our Faith

The Communion of Saints

I BELIEVE IN THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

In the Creed what does the word “believe” mean?

The word “believe” means to accept something as **true**.

Truth: when what we say is the way things really are

In the Creed what does the word “Communion” mean?

The word “communion” means joining and sharing with.

In the Creed what does the word “saint” mean?

The word “saint” means a holy person who **loves God perfectly**.

Perfect: Without fault

Love: wanting the good for the other person by helping them and wishing them well

What does “communion of saints” mean?

The “communion of saints” is the union of all the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven with Christ as their Head.

Faithful: all those who are practicing members of the Church

Soul: the spiritual part of a person, the source of his life

Christ: Messiah, the one anointed or sent by God to redeem the world



1. THE FAITHFUL OF THE CHURCH

Who are the faithful on earth?

The faithful on earth are all those who are practicing members of the Church.

All the faithful on earth are all on a journey to heaven. Our time here on earth is short and heaven is our true home.

How can the faithful on earth help one another?

The faithful on earth can help one other by loving God and loving others through the works of mercy as well as praying for others.

What are the works of mercy?

The works of mercy are acts of love to care for the physical and spiritual needs of others.

Some examples include:

- Feeding the hungry
- Shelter the homeless
- Visiting the sick
- Welcoming the stranger
- Burying the dead

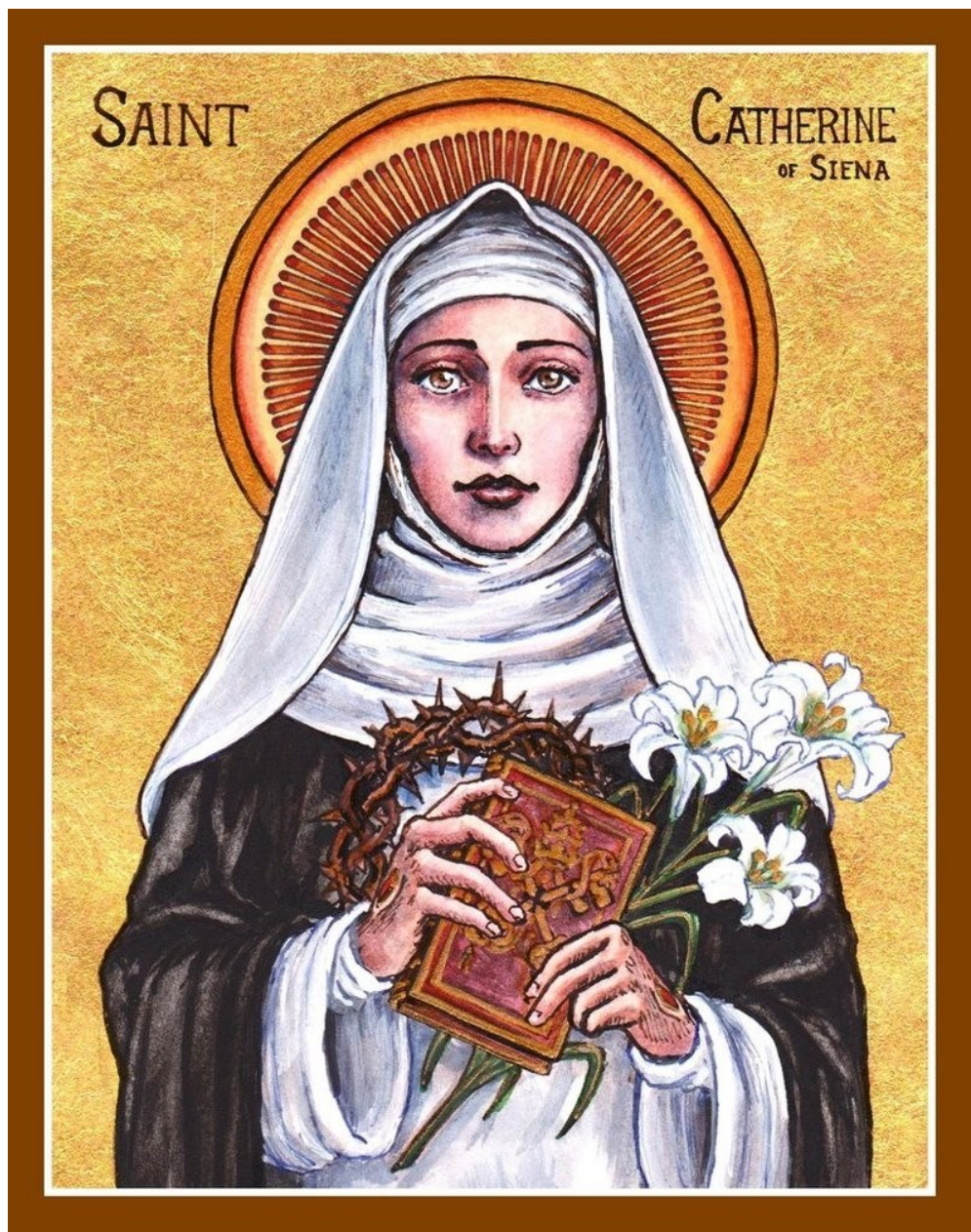
How do the Saints show works of mercy?

St Therese of Calcutta fed the hungry and gave shelter to the homeless. She spent her life feeding the poor and giving homes to people who had no homes.



St Catherine of Siena visited the sick and buried the dead.

She was unafraid of caring for the sick and those she couldn't heal, she prepared people for death and buried them with her own hands



St Benedict welcomed the stranger. He welcomed the poor, the sick and the traveller by loving them feeding them, giving them shelter.



Why do we pray for one another?

We pray for one another because our unity is one of love in Christ. We never pray alone. We ask people on a regular basis to pray for us or we join with them to pray for a need. The saints in heaven are also praying with us.

2. THE SOULS IN PURGATORY

What do we mean by the word “purgatory”?

The word “purgatory” means the place where the soul is made clean from sin before they can enter heaven.

Who are the souls in purgatory?

The souls in purgatory are the souls that need to be clean from sin before seeing God. They go to a place called purgatory.

In purgatory the souls are suffering because they do not get to see God. However, they are filled with peace because they are confident that they will be with God soon. They no longer fear for their salvation. They know that they are being made ready for heaven.



How can the faithful on earth help the souls in purgatory?

The faithful on earth can help the souls in purgatory by **praying, fasting, doing good works** and offering prayers for them, particularly at Mass.

Prayer: lifting the heart and mind to God;
one-one conversation with God

Fast: limit to what we eat and drink on special days.

e.g. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday

Good works: actions performed for the love of God and other people



Every year the Church specially prays for the souls in purgatory. This is called All Soul's day and it's celebrated on November 2. The month of November is devoted to prayers for those who have died, particularly our own family members and friends.

3. THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN

Who are the saints in heaven?

The saints in heaven are the holy men and women who have died, who have overcome sin and are now with God in heaven.

There are also the Saints who have been officially declared by the Church to be in heaven. They are the **canonised saints**.

These include St Francis of Assisi and St Mary MacKillop.



Canonised saint: someone whom the Church has officially declared to be in heaven

The saints can also be our families and friends.



These saints in heaven all came from different backgrounds but were all devoted completely to God. The most important saint that everyone loves is Mary.

Can we pray to the saints?

Yes, we can pray to God through the saints because they are truly united with us through Christ and they want to help us. In faith, they are our brothers and sisters.

By praying to the saints, we need to always remember that we never worship them. We only **worship** God. We can **honour** them.

Worship: Adoration and honour we give to God alone.

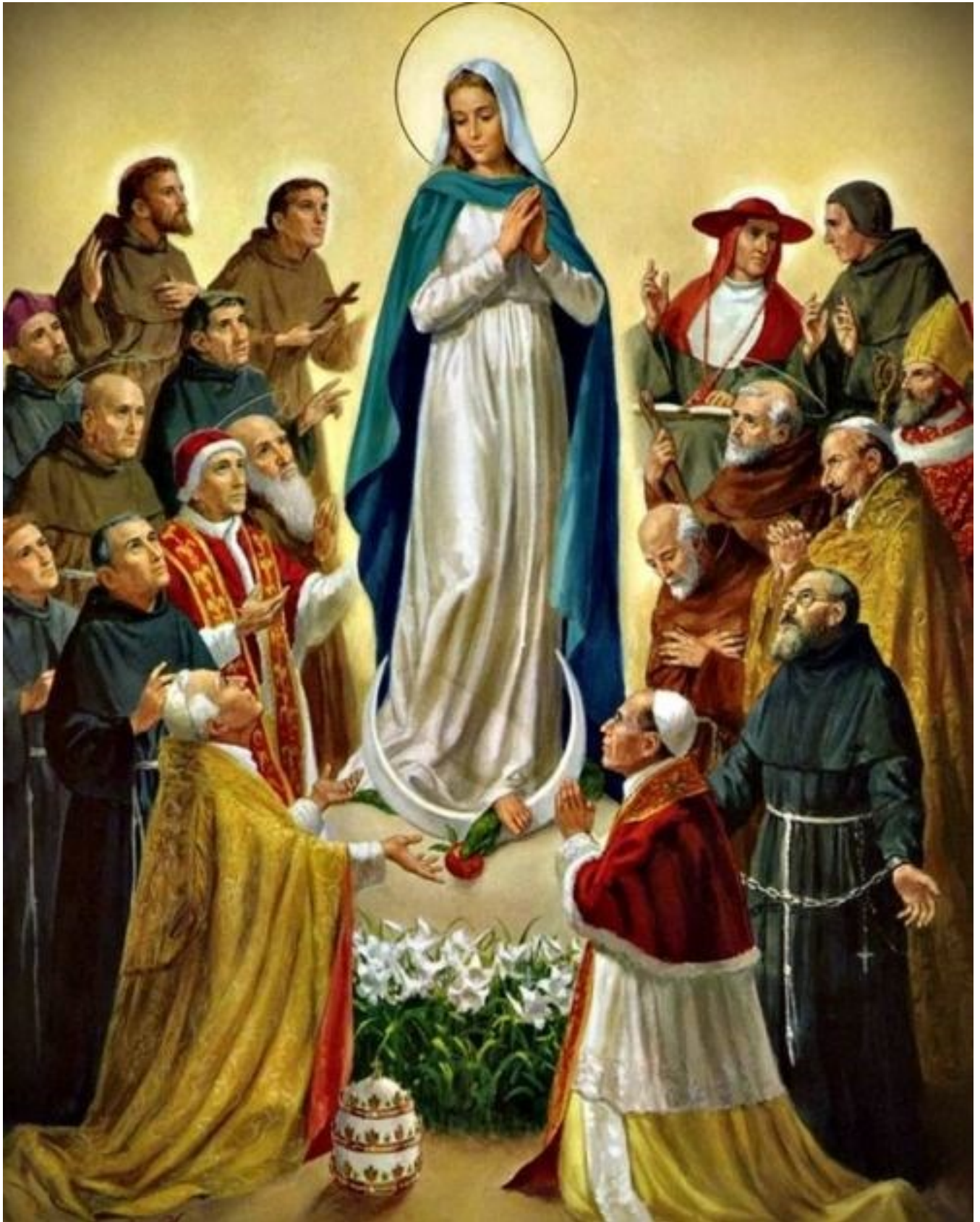
We cannot worship idols or false Gods

Honour: to praise and to show respect



The Church honours these saints with All Saints Day. This feast is celebrated on November 1 every year.

MARY: MOTHER OF GOD, QUEEN OF HEAVEN



Why does Mary have an important place in the communion of saints?

Mary has an important place in the communion of saints because she is the Mother of God, the mother Of Jesus Christ and Queen of heaven.

Mary has the closest relationship to Jesus than all the saints. She was with him from the moment she said yes to becoming the mother of God up until he died on the cross. Mary is also our mother, given to us by her son. She will always stand up for her children. She will always love us, and we can be sure that she will always pray for us now and at the hour of our death.

How can Mary help us?

Mary can help us by praying for us. She will gladly pray to God on our behalf. Jesus will listen to her because she is the holiest of all the saints.

However, we need to remind ourselves that Mary cannot be worshipped. We must only worship God. We can respect and honour Mary as the Mother of Our Lord.

How can we honour Mary?

We can honour Mary by visiting Marian shrines (holy place) and places of pilgrimages, celebrate her feast days, and saying prayers to Mary.

The most powerful prayer is the **Rosary**. The Rosary is peaceful prayers focusing on the lives of Jesus and Mary. The rosary brings many graces and happiness to people who pray it every day.

Rosary: a special prayer to Mary, thinking about scenes from the lives of Jesus and Mary.



