

# Saints Show Us the Way to God

Greetings!

God is so good, that sometimes in addition to the mother and father of our birth, he gives us additional mothers and fathers to love and care for us. My extra parents were Dodie and Bill. When Bill turned 70, Dodie threw him a big party. In the middle of the party, we heard the sounds of a New Orleans Jazz Band approaching. As they got closer, everyone joyfully joined in the song: “Oh, when the saints go marching in; Oh, when the saints go marching in, Lord, I want to be in that number, when the saints go marching in!”

## Ask your children if they admire any saints.

Bill and Dodie, who lived Christian lives of prayer, love, and service, were truly two of God’s great “little s” saints. I am quite sure that when each of them entered their promised heavenly home, they were “in that number,” part of the Communion of Saints!

This season, which we call Ordinary Time, can be made extraordinary by reflecting on the saints in our lives and the saints of the Church. Holy people from time immemorial offer us inspiration and hope. You can help your children understand how saints inspire by asking them about the people they know who show God’s love, peace, and self-giving. Why do these people stand out for them? If your child is named after an individual, perhaps you could



discuss why he or she was named after that person. My son Justin was given my husband Peter’s middle name at birth. Peter was named Peter Justin in honor of Brother Justin, a beloved teacher who inspired the faith of my father-in-law, Mario. What do these name legacies offer us as families? Why is it important that the Vanni family still remembers Brother Justin?

In the Orthodox Church, the feast day of the saint after whom you are named is even more important than your birthday. Are your children familiar with the saints they were named after? Do they know their saints’ days? You might ask your children if they admire any saints. You might take some time with the children to learn about a saint. Some saints to consider are St. Francis, St. Clare, St. Joan of Arc, St. Mary of Magdala, St. Ignatius, St. Benedict, and St. Scholastica. This is especially fun when someone in the family has been educated by a person who is part charism of an order established by one of our saints. Perhaps you would like to spend time with the children finding out more about the life and witness of the person your parish was named after. Discuss with your children how your community honors that spiritual legacy.

Most of all try to impress upon your children that all of you share, as St. Paul tells us, Christ’s “inheritance among the saints.” The saints, little and big “s,” all show us the way to God and our heavenly home.