

Saints Related to Young People

Helping Young People to identify Saints that are related to themselves helps them to break open the mystery of our Faith. It gives them the opportunity to holiness within themselves and the ability to know that they too can become Saints one day. Below is a list of Saints related to young people. Feel free to incorporate them into your different encounters with young people.

Blessed Carlo Acutis

A Catholic Italian teenager who died in 2006 from Leukemia. He was beatified on October 10, 2020 in Assisi, Italy. He was a gamer and computer programmer who loved the Eucharist and soccer. As a teenager, he was diagnosed with leukemia and would offer all the suffering he endured for Pope Benedict XVI and for the Church. From a young age, Carlo seemed to have a special love for God, although his family wasn't particularly devout. After receiving his First Communion, he went to Mass as often as he could and made Holy Hours along with attending Mass. He went to confession weekly. It was his faith that inspired a deeper conversion within his mom. He had an aptitude for being a programmer and built a website that catalogued Eucharistic Miracles. He loved video games (especially the Playstation 2), but only allowed himself to play games for an hour a week as a form of penance and spiritual discipline. At the time of his beatification, his body laid in repose in a glass tomb and was dressed in jeans and a pair of Nikes, as a nod to the casual clothes he wore during his life. Carlo used his giftedness for the Glory of God. Teens find a special kinship with Blessed Carlo as he is a recently Beatified teenage Saint.

(Info obtained from Catholic News Agency)

St. Jose Sanchez del Rio—Persecuted Christians, children, adolescents and Sahuayo (Mexico)

Canonized on October 16, 2016, Jose Sanchez del Rio is a martyr for the faith. He was put to death by the Mexican Government during the Cristero War because he refused to renounce his Catholic Faith. Born in Mexico, he loved his faith and grew up with a strong devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe. When he was 12 years old the Cristero Wars began in Mexico. During this time, the Mexican government worked to eliminate the influence of the Catholic Church within the country. It persecuted the Church by seizing property, closing schools, and executing Catholic priests. To defend the Church, many of the peasants in the area rebelled against the government. Jose wanted to join in the fight but was too young. Eventually, his mother relented and allowed him to join the resistance as a flagbearer. During a battle, Jose was captured and was asked to deny his faith. He refused and was tortured. Refusing to renounce his faith angered the soldiers so much, they cut off the bottoms of his feet and forced him to walk through town. While he did this, he prayed the rosary and sang songs to Our Lady of Guadalupe, proclaiming "I will never give in Vivo Cristo Rey y Santa Maria de Guadalupe." His Feast Day is celebrated on Feb 10.

<http://secretariat.synod.va/content/synod2018/en/youth-testimonies/saint-jose-sanchez-del-rio.html>

St. Maria Goretti—Youth, young women, purity and victims of rape

Born in October 1890, in the Corinaldo, Italy, St. Maria Goretti was canonized by Pope Pius XII in 1950. After her father's death from Malaria, Maria's mother struggled financially, and Maria would take care of the home while watching her youngest sister. On July 5, 1902, Maria was sewing on the front steps of her home when a neighbor, Alessandro grabbed her and attempted to rape her. During the attack, Maria cried out that it was a mortal sin, and that Alessandro would go to hell. He persisted and she continued reminding him that this was not what God wanted and would rather die than submit to his advances. This made Alessandro angry and at this point, he stabbed her with a knife. As she attempted to reach the door, she was stabbed three more times and Alessandro left. She was found by her family who took her to the hospital for surgery. The surgery was unsuccessful, and she died the next day after forgiving Alessandro. After spending 30 years in jail and repenting following a dream he had in which Maria appeared, Alessandro was present for Maria's canonization.

https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=78

In his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christus Vivit*, Pope Francis listed the following Saints as examples for young people:

Young saints

49. The heart of the Church is also full of young saints who devoted their lives to Christ, many of them even to dying a martyr's death. They were precious reflections of the young Christ; their radiant witness encourages us and awakens us from our lethargy. The Synod pointed out that “many young saints have allowed the features of youth to shine forth in all their beauty, and in their day, they have been real prophets of change. Their example shows what the young are capable of, when they open themselves up to encounter Christ”.

50. “Through the holiness of the young, the Church can renew her spiritual ardour and her apostolic vigour. The balm of holiness generated by the good lives of so many young people can heal the wounds of the Church and of the world, bringing us back to that fullness of love to which we have always been called: young saints inspire us to return to our first love (cf. *Rev 2:4*)”. Some saints never reached adulthood, yet they showed us that there is another way to spend our youth. Let us recall at least some of them who, each in his or her own way, and at different periods of history, lived lives of holiness.

51. In the third century, **Saint Sebastian** was a young captain of the Praetorian Guard. It is said that he spoke constantly of Christ and tried to convert his companions, to the point that he was ordered to renounce his faith. Since he refused, he was shot with arrows, yet he survived and continued to proclaim Christ fearlessly. In the end, Sebastian was flogged to death.

52. **Saint Francis of Assisi**, while very young and full of great dreams, heard Jesus' call to become poor like him and to rebuild the Church by his witness. He joyfully renounced everything he had and is now the saint of universal fraternity, the brother of all. He praised the Lord for his creatures. Francis died in 1226.

53. **Saint Joan of Arc** was born in 1412. She was a young peasant girl who, despite her tender years, fought to defend France from invaders. Misunderstood for her demeanour, her actions and her way of living the faith, Joan was burned at the stake.

54. **Blessed Andrew Phû Yên** was a young Vietnamese man of the seventeenth century. He was a catechist and assisted the missionaries. He was imprisoned for his faith, and since he refused to renounce it, he was killed. Andrew died uttering the name of Jesus.

55. In that same century, **Saint Kateri Tekakwitha**, a young native of North America, was persecuted for her faith and, to escape, walked over three hundred kilometres in the wilderness. Kateri consecrated herself to God and died saying: "Jesus, I love you!"

56. **Saint Dominic Savio** offered all his sufferings to Mary. When Saint John Bosco taught him that holiness involves being constantly joyful, he opened his heart to a contagious joy. He wanted to be close to the most abandoned and infirm of his fellow young people. Dominic died in 1857 at fourteen years of age, saying: "What a wondrous thing I am experiencing!"

57. **Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus** was born in 1873. At fifteen years of age, having overcome many difficulties, she succeeded in entering the Carmelite convent. Thérèse lived the little way of complete trust in the Lord's love and determined to fan with her prayers the fire of love burning in the heart of the Church.

58. **Blessed Ceferino Namuncurá** was a young Argentinian, the son of the chief of a remote tribe of indigenous peoples. He became a Salesian seminarian, filled with the desire to return to his tribe, bringing Jesus Christ to them. Ceferino died in 1905.

59. **Blessed Isidore Bakanja** was a layman from the Congo who bore witness to his faith. He was tortured at length for having proposed Christianity to other young people. Forgiving his executioner, Isidore died in 1909.

60. **Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati**, who died in 1925, “was a young man filled with a joy that swept everything along with it, a joy that also overcame many difficulties in his life.” Pier Giorgio said that he wanted to return the love of Jesus that he received in Holy Communion by visiting and helping the poor.

61. **Blessed Marcel Callo** was a young French man who died in 1945. Marcel was imprisoned in a concentration camp in Austria, where he strengthened his fellow prisoners in faith amid harsh labours.

62. The young **Blessed Chiara Badano**, who died in 1990, “experienced how pain could be transfigured by love... The key to her peace and joy was her complete trust in the Lord and the acceptance of her illness as a mysterious expression of his will for her sake and that of others”.

63. May these and so many other young people who perhaps in silence and hiddenness lived the Gospel to the full, intercede for the Church, so that she may be full of joyous, courageous and committed young people who can offer the world new testimonies of holiness.

Emily “Em” Teter is the Director of Religious Education at St. Luke Church in McLean. She’s spent many years helping young people love the Lord and she loves Workcamp, World Youth Day and making ways for young people to encounter the Lord and know of his love. She lives in Centreville with her artist husband Erik and her daughter Belle, who’s named after a transcendental property, not the princess. She enjoys hosting people for meals, chasing after her toddler and is always on the quest for the perfect cup of tea. She hopes to one day be the patron saint of sensible, yet fashionable shoes.