

# You Too Can Be a Saint!

## LUMEN GENTIUM: DOGMATIC CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH

No, it's not impossible....it's even necessary. The truth is that sooner or later we all need to become saints in order to get to heaven. And lest you feel overwhelmed by that thought, don't forget that heaven is filled with millions of people who were never canonized, from all races and walks of life, and who are now enjoying God's glory in perfect fulfillment and happiness.

The universal call to sanctity is one of the central teachings of the *Lumen Gentium* (the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Church). In teaching this, the Church is simply repeating what Jesus himself said to his first followers, and to all who would come afterwards: "Be holy, as your heavenly Father is holy" (Mt.5:48). By Baptism we have all been united to Christ in a most intimate way, and now we are called to give glory to God throughout our life, and to serve others generously. This is what the saints have done throughout time.

As we look through the *Lumen Gentium*, it's most encouraging and consoling to know that we are not alone in our effort to become holy. The Holy Trinity itself---God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit---has entered our souls and all three together have given us a share in their own life through the sacraments, especially Baptism and the Holy Eucharist which is the Sacrament of Love par excellence. This is the greatest and most powerful source of our hope.

In fact it's not only ourselves, but the entire people of God share in God's holiness. Guided by the teachings of the Pope and the bishops in union with him (the Magisterium), they are called to evangelize the world and spread God's kingdom in their ordinary lives. They are called to be a true leaven in society, elevating all human activities including the family and the different fields of work, thus opening society more and more to God's grace.

We also know that on earth, we're only pilgrims or wayfarers, as we look forward to God's definitive kingdom. Even if we have to suffer pain and sorrow in this life, we know that Christ will never abandon his Church or his people. What's more, we have the great consolation of living in the Communion of Saints, that immense network of holy men and women in this life and the next, who are continually accompanying us and assisting us by their prayers and intercessions.

The *Lumen Gentium* ends with a beautiful chapter on Mary the Mother of God. Speaking of saints, she is of course the greatest saint who ever lived and the model for all of us---both men and women. She is the Mother of the Church, and loves each of us in a marvelous way. Let's go to her frequently in our personal and family needs, and pray for those who are outside of the Church, or perhaps drifting away from her. With her maternal care the Blessed Virgin will gather them into the one sheepfold that her Son founded: the one Church which is holy, catholic, and apostolic.

**Q: What can I do to bring Jesus Christ more into my life?**

**Q: How can I help spread God's kingdom right where I am---with my work, my family, and my friends?**

Fr. Michael Giesler

