



What Makes Us Catholic?

Canonization

Mother Teresa will be canonized a saint in September. Recently Popes John XIII and John Paul II and Father Juniperro Serra were canonized. What does it mean to be canonized?

Canon is a Church term that simply means a list. So, to be canonized is to be added to the Church's official list of saints.

Does a person have to be a Pope, Bishop, Priest or religious to be a saint? Does a person even have to be canonized to be a saint? NO. The Church defines a saint as "A person who, after having lived a life of virtue, dies in the state of grace and has been granted the reward of eternal life with God."1 In other words, all who make it to heaven are saints. This is the outcome we're all called to.

We can't know the state of a person's soul when they die, so generally we don't know for sure if someone is a saint. The Church names certain saints to be models and intercessors for us, and performs a rigorous scrutiny to ensure that this person is, indeed, a saint in heaven with God. The process is called canonization, as at the end of the process the name of the saint is added to the canon (or list) of saints. This is for our help, giving us role models to study and emulate, and to encourage us that we too can spend eternity with God, even if our lives have not always been what we would call holy. Many of the canonized saints struggled with holiness in their lives. In the end, they turned their lives to Jesus, and are spending eternity with Him. That should be our goal as well!

Watch the bulletin for more information about the canonization process.

Want to read more about this topic?

Sources:

1. United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, p506;
2. <http://catholicism.about.com/od/thesaints/>
3. <https://www.ewtn.com/johnpaul2/cause/process.asp>

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