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What Does God's Word Say About... His Holy Saints

This past week the Roman Catholic Church canonized Mother Teresa as a Saint. In this article we will use excerpts from the website catholicapologetics.org explaining the process as to how the Church [Catholic] chooses candidates and determines their ultimate canonization. "The Roman Catholic Church since the 10th century has officially applied the standard of holiness to certain individuals who have lived exemplary Christian lives and through a lengthy process of prayer and study have declared that the individual is in heaven. One principle way for God to affirm the presence of an individual in heaven with Him is through the performance of miracles through the intercession of that person."

The canonization process includes six steps. 1) Canon [meaning a standard or measuring rod] norms regarding the procedure to be followed for causes of saints are contained in the Apostolic Constitution. 2) To begin a cause it is necessary for at least five years to have passed since the death of the candidate. 3) The bishop of the diocese in which the person whose beatification is being requested died, is responsible for beginning the investigation. Witnesses are called before the tribunal to recount concrete facts on the exercise of Christian virtues. At this point he/she is entitled to the title Servant of God. 4) Once the diocesan investigation is finished, the acts and documentation is passed on to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. An examination [theological] by nine theologians give their vote. If the majority of the theologians are in favor, the cause is passed on for examination by cardinals and bishops who are members of the congregation. If their judgment is favorable they present the results of the entire course of the cause to the Holy Father. 5) For beatification a miracle attributed to the Servant of God must be verified after his/her death. The required miracle must be proven through the appropriate canonical investigation, and the Holy Father decides on beatification. With beatification the candidate receives the title of Blessed. 6) For canonization a second miracle is needed, attributed to the Blessed and having occurred after his/her beatification. Pontifical infallibility is involved. With canonization, the Blessed acquired the title of Saint.

The Catholic Church's definition of miracle means that a "sign" and a "wonder" are events with divine significance and something very unusual or out of the ordinary. In ordinary language: that which is beyond the present knowledge of the medical or physical sciences. The final approval for these two miracles lies in the hand of the Pope. The Catholic Church believes that anyone can become a saint if they seek holiness and sainthood. But, technically, the Church does not make saints; it recognizes someone who is in heaven.

Nowhere in the New Testament do we find any scripture related to the canonization of saints. In fact, Jesus said, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?" He went on to say "Every plant [church] which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted...And if a blind man guides a blind man both will fall into a pit" (Matt. 15:3, 13-14). Jesus said, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:32). The following is what the word of God says about the sanctification of saints: "to all who are beloved of God in Rome, CALLED as saints" (Rom. 1:7). How is one CALLED? "God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. It was for this He CALLED you through our gospel that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13-14). Paul wrote that God "saved us and CALLED us with a holy calling not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity...through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:9-10).

Paul defined sainthood as being those who "have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling, with all who in every place call on the name of our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:2). Now notice who does the sanctification according to scripture. "But by His doing you are in Christ, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification" (1 Cor. 1:30).

The Hebrew writer said "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father" (Heb. 2:11). The only way that we can be sanctified is through Jesus, "that He might sanctify the people through His own blood..." (Heb. 13:12). There is only one way that one can come into contact with the blood of Jesus: Romans 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:11-12). Finally, what did Jesus say about men glorifying other men? "How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?" (John 5:44).

Send any comments, questions, or requests for a Bible study to:
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