

## 8 - Patron Saints

### **Scripture Reading – Revelation 7:9-10**

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb!”



### **Lesson**

#### **What is a patron saint?**

A patron saint is “A saint or blessed who, since early Christian times, has been chosen as a special intercessor with God for a particular person, place, community, or organization.” [1]

#### **Why is a patron saint important?**

“The name is important because God knows each of us by name, that is, in our uniqueness as persons. In Baptism a Christian receives his or her own name in the Church. It should preferably be the name of a saint who might offer the baptized a model of sanctity and an assurance of his or her intercession before God.” [2] If we choose a different name for confirmation than our baptism name, then it should be a great model of holiness, an example for us to reach for.

#### **When and why did the Church start this practice of patron saints?**

The Church has been doing this since the beginning of Her establishment. It started in the church when Jesus changed Simon’s name to Peter. “The custom arose from the biblical fact that a change of personal name indicated a change in the person, e.g., Abram to Abraham, Simon to Peter, Saul to Paul; and from the practice of having churches built over the tombs of martyrs.” [3] At our baptism and confirmation we take on the name of a saint or blessed as a special intercessor.

#### **Who can have a patron saint?**

Really anyone can have a patron saint at anytime, but in specific cases a person gains a patron saint when they are brought into the body of Christ (i.e. Baptism and Confirmation).

#### **When do I get a patron saint?**

Pretty much the same as the answer before, we can have a patron saint any time in our lives, but we take a patron saint at our baptism and confirmation.

### **Can I keep the same saint name that I received at Baptism for Confirmation?**

Yes, absolutely. At one time, confirmation was administered right after baptism. When this was done the person would keep the same name for both sacraments.

### **Can I only have one patron saint for confirmation?**

Yes. When we are being sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit we are sealed with our first name and our patron saint name. We should only choose one patron saint.

### **Am I stuck with just one patron saint for the rest of my life?**

If someone means they are “stuck” with only one saint for the rest of their lives and they cannot admire other saints and take them on as a personal patron then no, of course not. However, once we are confirmed with our patron saint then we cannot go back and change that name. But we can add other saints to our favorites list. Many times we have “playlists” for certain music that we love. So too we have saints playlists. We can ask for certain saints intercessions for a time, and then go to other saints. Our baptismal and confirmation name however will stay the same, and we should always ask for their intercession.

### **How do I choose the right patron saint?**

A patron Saint should be someone that the candidate look up to and emulate holiness. It is the saints *life* that should resonate with the candidate more than just who they are the patron of. We must avoid choosing a patron Saint just solely on their name or what they are the patron of. While those can be contributing factors it should not be the sole reason. The patron Saint should be someone they look to as an example and call upon for their intercession for the rest of their lives and not just where the candidate is right now in their state in life. Finally, the candidate should be assisted in and through their sponsor primarily along with their parents and the finally their catechists.

Here are some resources to look into when deciding on a patron saint:

[www.catholic.org/saints](http://www.catholic.org/saints)

[www.etwn.com/saintsHoly](http://www.etwn.com/saintsHoly)

[www.sacred-texts.com/chr/lots/index.htm](http://www.sacred-texts.com/chr/lots/index.htm)

[www.daughtersofstpaul.com/saintday/index.html](http://www.daughtersofstpaul.com/saintday/index.html)

There are also hundreds of books on the lives of the saints that can help choose the right patron saint for each person.

### **Lesson Notes**

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[1] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 410

[2] Compendium of the Catholic Church, 264

[3] Hardon, Modern Catholic Dictionary pg. 410