



On Becoming a Saint **by Joe Sixpack**

Jesus told us in Mathew 5:48, “You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” You’ll notice by the language He used that this is not a suggestion, but a command by His use of the word *must*. He didn’t say it’s a goal to shoot for. He didn’t tell us to give it that old college try. He said we *must* become perfect. How perfect? As perfect as God the Father. And how perfect is God the Father? *Infinitely perfect!*

Is it possible to become perfect? You bet! Perfection is the very definition of sainthood. All of the saints were perfect by the time they died. They perhaps didn’t achieve absolute perfection until they went through their final passion just prior to death, but they did get there.

Achieving sainthood is more than possible, but we can’t do it on our own. While we become true men and women (one who does always and only the holy will of God), we simply have to develop a prayer life relationship with God and continually ask Him for the graces to advance in holiness. Will you mess up? Sure you will. You might even commit mortal sin from time to time on your journey to sainthood. The key is to take Christ’s example. The Church teaches that every time He fell under the burden of the cross (a metaphor for our sin), He got right back up again. That’s what we have to do every time we fail. In other words, say an immediate act of contrition and plod forward with a fresh resolve to do as you ought, rather than doing as you want. It goes with saying that you also need to go to confession at the earliest possible moment.

And I would strongly recommend you get a good spiritual director. Be careful about whom you chose to direct your soul. Just because a man is a priest doesn’t necessarily mean he’d make a good spiritual director. There are plenty of priests in the world who aren’t faithful to the Church’s teachings or their sacerdotal vows—obviously not something you have to worry about, or you wouldn’t even have access to this. That’s not to say most are that way, so don’t misunderstand me. Indeed, most priests are good, holy men who take seriously the teachings of the Church and their priestly vows. But you still have to be careful.

Another reason not just any priest will do is because not all of them are even equipped to be spiritual directors. Most aren’t trained for it, and among those who are, they haven’t been trained in classical spiritual direction. Priests who are not trained, or have been trained in the modern psychologically based mumbo-jumbo that passes for spiritual direction, might possibly end up having the opposite of the desired effect and cost you your immortal soul. That’s not the

intention of the priest, though. Doggone it, some priests just aren't equipped for spiritual direction.

In addition to avoiding the sort of priests mentioned in the previous paragraph, I wholeheartedly recommend you avoid asking a nun or lay person to direct you. There may be some very good nuns and lay people out there, but your best bet is always a priest. Thanks to the sacramental graces of Holy Orders, a priest has a great special advantage when it comes to spiritual direction, because he can get to know your soul in a very intimate way. The age of the priest doesn't matter; only the degree of apparent holiness.

And under no circumstances let anyone get away with telling you the "old ways" of spiritual direction don't work anymore, that mankind and the Church have advanced beyond those archaic ways. *Baloney!* Times may change, but man is the very same as he was when our First Parents committed original sin, and the Church is a mere 2,000 years young. Besides, how many saints do we produce today with the so-called new ways? When classical spirituality and direction were at their peak, hundreds (perhaps thousands) of saints came flowing out of the heart of the Church! If classical spirituality was good enough for the likes of St. Teresa of Avila, St. Anthony of Padua, St. John Bosco, and countless others, it should certainly be good enough for you.

You can't leave everything up to your spiritual director if you want to advance in the spiritual life, though. You have to read, too. There are hundreds and hundreds of good books out there (many written by saints) that will put you on the road to perfection. Off hand, the first two that come to mind are *Introduction to the Devout Life*, by Saint Francis de Sales, and *Interior Castle*, by Teresa of Ávila. Just Google the titles, as I know they're sold in a lot of places. Come to think of it, in this modern age, I'm sure you can find these books available in both audio and video formats.

There is a lot more I could tell you about becoming a saint, especially on the mechanics of it, but half the fun for you will be in discovering it all on your own.

Did I just say fun? Yep, I sure did. One of the saddest things I've ever heard was in a Billy Joel song called *Only the Good Die Young*. The sad lyrics are, "I'd rather laugh with the sinners than cry with the sins." This is so untrue. Saints are all happy people with a great sense of humor. Sinners may laugh in this life, but they certainly won't in the next life. And I can tell you from experience that sinners who are given over to their passions and not committed to God are *not* happy—no matter how much they laugh. And that's What We Believe... Why We Believe It.

Do you want to become a saint in obedience to Jesus? Visit JoeSixpackAnswers.com and ask me more about it. In fact, ask me any Catholic question you want. While you're there, sign up for my free email course about the Catholic Church to learn things you never knew! This *free* email course will arrive in your inbox every three days, jam packed with things that will make your head spin and make you proud to be a Catholic.