

# TERMS TO KNOW

## **BEATIFICATION**

A process, guided by the Vatican's Congregation for the Causes of Saints, that begins with an intense investigation of a deceased person's life, writings and virtues and, except in the case of martyrs, proof of one miracle worked by God through the intercession of the person. If the person meets all of the requirements, the pope gives the person the title "Blessed" and decrees that he or she may be honored or venerated.

## **BLESSED**

The title given to a person who has been beatified.

## **CANONIZATION**

A declaration by the pope that a person who died as a martyr and/or who practiced Christian virtue to a heroic degree is with God and is worthy of honor and imitation. People who are canonized — declared to be saints — are venerated and honored by the entire Catholic Church.

## **CARDINAL VIRTUES**

Prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude.

## **CAUSE**

The name given to the process of investigating, studying and promoting a person for beatification and canonization.

## **CONGREGATION FOR THE CAUSES OF SAINTS**

A Vatican delegation that is responsible for the processes required for beatification and canonization causes and for the preservation of relics of holy people.

## **DECREE**

An official order issued by a pope and/or by an ecumenical council for the entire Roman Catholic Church.

## **INTERCEDE**

To make a request on behalf of another person or persons.

## **INTERCESSORY PRAYER**

To ask a holy person (such as a saint or a blessed) to take a request to God.

## **MIRACLES**

Observable events or effects which — because they cannot be explained by the ordinary laws of nature — are attributed to direct action of God. Proof of one miracle is required for beatification; after beatification, proof of a second miracle is required for canonization. Miracles are not required for the canonization of martyrs.

## **MARTYR**

A person who decides to suffer persecution and death rather than give up his or her faith or principles.

## **PRAY**

To talk to God; to offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving to God; to ask for help from God. All prayers are directed to God. Prayers also are offered to God through the intercession of holy people — the blessed and the saints.

## **RELICS**

The physical remains and effects of saints and martyrs. Relics are respected as sacred memorials of saints.

## **RELIQUARY**

A case or container in which relics are displayed.

## **SAINT**

A title of honor and recognition given by the church to people who lived holy lives, who are believed to be in heaven and, thus, capable of interceding with God.

## **THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES**

Faith, hope and charity.

## **VENERATE**

To have feelings of deep respect and honor for people who are with God in heaven.