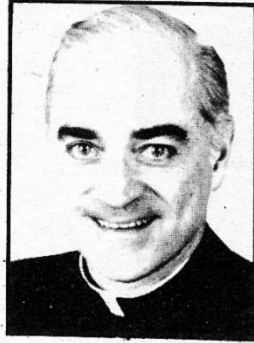


Father John Catoir

# Becoming Saints

"There is a need for personal holiness in all members of the People of God, all those who are united in spirit with Jesus, for their sakes and for the sanctification of the world." (Vatican II's Constitution On The Church, Nov. 21, 1964)



During the Easter Season, let's try to remember that Jesus did not ask us to perform great deeds, or engage in a constant flurry of activity. He instructed us to go forth and become a light in this world of darkness. Pope John XXIII said, "Every believer is called by Christ to be a spark of light, a center of love, a vivifying leaven in this world. And this can be accomplished all the more perfectly when each one lives in deep intimacy and communion with God."

To be a light and a vivifying leaven means bearing your cross with courage, living in a spirit of peace and serenity, and doing little things cheerfully for the love of God.

In one of his parables about the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus compared His Father to the owner of an estate who hired workers to harvest his field. "And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing around; and he then said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into my vineyard too.'"

Jesus calls all of us to work in the vineyard and to harvest souls for the Kingdom of heaven. We can answer his calling by doing the duties of daily life cheerfully for the love of God. By

meeting the continual life in the world, by showing justice and consideration as an employer, or integrity and dependability as an employee. We grow in holiness day by day through prayer and action. Prayerful action is not the same as mindless activity.

In everyday conversations we can speak with charity and truthfulness. In our relationships we can be more forgiving, in our suffering we can be more accepting. Perhaps the most difficult spiritual challenge of all is accepting unavoidable suffering with courage. Cheerful acquiescence is superior to doleful resignation.

If while doing all this, we can keep in mind the material needs of the poor, remembering the lofty ideals of the Gospel: "When I was hungry, you gave me to eat, etc., etc.," then we are really on the way to becoming saints.

These ideals have been preached down through the centuries and so many saints have lived them heroically. One of my favorites is St. Ignatius, the successor of St. Peter as bishop of Antioch, who was martyred in 107 A.D. He once advised his persecuted colleagues how to bear up under pain: "...to their pride, offer your kindness; to their blasphemies, your prayers; to their errors, your firmness in the faith; to their arrogance, your humility. Without ever trying to render evil to those who offend you, show you are truly disciples of the loving Lord."

Jesus called all of us out of darkness into his marvelous light. We may not be saints just yet, but we are certainly saints-in-training.