

A Very Short Catechesis on the Veneration of the Relics  
of Blesseds Louis and Zélie Martin  
by Mark E. Ginter, Ph.D. (11-17-14)

1. What is a “blessed” or a “saint?”

A “blessed” or a “saint” is a disciple of Jesus Christ who, after death, lives happily ever after in God's perfect presence. The technical meaning of “blessed” or “saint” refers to an official recognition by the Church that a person's soul is now in heaven.



2. How does someone become a “blessed” or a “saint?”

To become a blessed or a saint is the task of every Catholic while on earth. We might know someone who, during his or her lifetime, accomplished this goal. The Church gives us All Saints' Day to celebrate those countless saints who lack official recognition. Official recognition of a person as “blessed” or “saint” is a long and thorough process. It is called the cause for canonization.

3. Isn't contact between the living and the dead forbidden by the bible?

Not all contact is forbidden. Just divination is forbidden. Meritorious contact with the dead is called veneration. It is the seeking of help from those who “die in the Lord,” (Rev. 14:13).

4. What does the Apostles' Creed mean when it says, “I believe...in the communion of the saints?”

The communion of the saints is the communication between the three states of the Church in the Holy Spirit: the Church in heaven, the Church in purgatory, the Church on earth.

5. Why should we imitate the saints?

We should imitate the saints because they are the friends of God. We are the friends of Jesus when we love one another as Jesus loves us. The saints imitate Jesus in their time and place. So, they are examples of how to imitate Jesus closer to our time and place.

6. What does it mean to venerate a saint's image or relic?

Only God is worshiped and adored. Saints, with the Blessed Virgin Mary being the first among them, are honored. This honor is called veneration. To venerate a saint's image or relic is to kiss or to touch it reverently as if that friend of God was physically present.

7. Who are Blesseds Louis and Zélie Martin?

They are the parents of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, the “Little Flower,” (1873-1897), a doctor of the Church. Venerable Louis (1823-1894) and Zélie (1831-1877) Martin were beatified on Oct. 19, 2008, in Lisieux, France. They had a total of nine children. The five who survived into adulthood all became nuns. Evidently, they created a Catholic home that helped their children, not hindered them, to accomplish their goal in life. Their feastday is their wedding date, July 12.

May Blesseds Louis and Zélie Martin pray for us who are potential saints to become actual saints, and may our families especially be places of sowing and growing seeds for a new springtime of the Church.