



Assembly

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Saints alive

Aim:

- To encourage pupils to consider how important it is to have something to believe in

Introduction

Saints alive

Question: What is a saint?

(Pause)

Just over a week ago, the penultimate step was taken for the late Pope John Paul II (who died six years ago) to becoming a saint in the Roman Catholic Church, when he was beatified by the present Pope, Benedict XVI.

Question: Why is he being made a saint?

(Pause)

Officials at the Vatican, the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church, believe that it was the intervention of the dead Pope, pleading with God himself, that cured a French nun from Parkinson's Disease. They believe it's this miracle that qualifies John Paul for sainthood.

Looking Deeper

The saints where we live

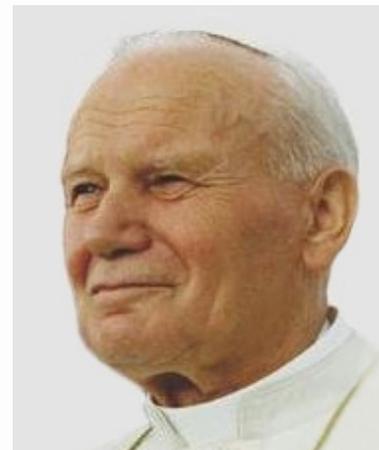
Your feelings about the creation of this new saint will vary, depending on what you believe about miracles, life after death and God in general. There is, however, another understanding of the term 'saint' that brings it much closer to home. Paul, later to become Saint Paul, one of the earliest Christian saints, wrote many letters to people that he'd met on his travels around the Mediterranean. Rather than addressing his letter to 'my dear friends' he

frequently addressed his letter to 'the saints' who live at Ephesus, Philippi or Colossae, etc. These were ordinary people living in ordinary towns and cities in what we now know as Turkey and Greece.

Question: So what qualified these ordinary people to be called saints?

(Pause)

To Paul, a saint was quite simply someone who was faithful to what they believed in. For some, this meant suffering prejudice and persecution in an alien culture. For others, it meant being unwilling to compromise their beliefs in the face of moral, financial and political pressure. A saint for Paul was someone who stood up for Jesus.



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There are some of you who face exactly that same pressure. Amongst your friends it may not be fashionable to have a religious belief, whether it be Christian, Moslem, Sikh, Jewish or any other faith. It may be hard to admit to that belief and even harder to avoid compromising the practical does and don'ts of your religion. You are just like Paul's saints.

There are other beliefs too that require some courage to hold. For some of you it may be hard to hold your views as a vegetarian, a pacifist or to say no to the temptations of



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drugs, under-age drinking or sex. Maybe you too have earned the privilege of being a saint. The easy way would be to become part of the crowd, to drift along with the majority. Yet something important would be lost, for all of us as well as for yourself, if you did. For saints remind us of what might be. They provide a reminder that there are other ways of thinking, other ways of speaking, other ways of behaving. And, as I look out at you, I believe there are many saints among you.

Reflection

What are the situations I face today about which I feel apprehensive?

What are the different ways in which I can choose to respond?

How can I make it easier to give the response I know is right?

Prayer

May I today be faithful to what I believe in.

May it be reflected in what I think, what I say and what I do.

May I deal courageously with every temptation to compromise.

Amen

Thought for the day:

Search for the saint in yourself

Key words:

Saint

Beatification

John Paul II

Roman Catholic Church