

on the Beatification of Venerable Fr. Michael McGivney

1. BACKGROUND ON VENERABLE FR. MCGIVNEY

A dedicated Catholic parish Priest in CT (1852-1890), founder of mutual aid fraternity Knights of Columbus

**to strengthen faith of Catholic men

**to combat poverty and suffering of the poor

**to enroll men of the parish in mutual life insurance coverage and provide life insurance benefits to their widows & orphans

Fr. Michael McGivney was declared “Venerable Servant of GOD’ by Pope Benedict XVI in 2008:

**He lived a venerable Christian life of heroic virtue and faith to make a difference for the good in bringing a part of GOD’s Kingdom in Heaven on earth.

**He was devoted to caring for the suffering, poor, widows & orphans of his parish.

**He died ministering to the sick during a pandemic at age 38 years old.

**He offered up a life of sacrifice in The Name of JESUS CHRIST, even his own very life, as an offering for others.

**Fr. Michael is now entering the process of “beatification” with the Congregation for The Cause of Saints of The Catholic Church.

2. WHAT IS A “VIRTUE?”

CCC 1803 - A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions. The goal of a virtuous life is to [humbly grow in holiness to] become like GOD.”

3. WHAT ARE THE 4 MORAL NATURAL VIRTUES?

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 8:7

if one loves righteousness, whose works are virtues, She teaches moderation and prudence, righteousness and fortitude.

CCC 1804 - The moral virtues are acquired by human effort. They are the fruit and seed of morally good acts; they dispose all the powers of the human being for communion with Divine Love.

**moderation (temperance);

**prudence (wisdom);

**righteousness (justice);

**fortitude (courage)

4. WHAT ARE THE 3 CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL VIRTUES?

I CORINTHIANS 13:13

But now [of all spiritual gifts,] faith, hope, love, abide these three; the greatest of these is love.

CCC 1813 - The theological virtues are the foundation of Christian moral activity; they animate it and give it its special character. They inform and give life to all the moral virtues. They are infused by GOD into the souls of the faithful to make them capable of acting as His children and of meriting eternal life. They are the pledge of the presence and action of The HOLY SPIRIT in the faculties of the human being. There are three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity.

**faith (firm spiritual belief);

**hope (confident expectation);

**love (charity & self-giving)

5. WHY IS CHARITY/LOVE THE GREATEST VIRTUE?

CCC 826 - Charity is the soul of the holiness to which all are called: it governs, shapes, and perfects all the means of sanctification:

“If The Church was a body composed of different members, it couldn't lack the noblest of all; it must have a Heart, and a Heart burning with Love. And I realized that This Love alone was The True Motive Force which enabled the other members of The Church to act; if it ceased to function, the Apostles would forget to preach The Gospel, the Martyrs would refuse to shed their blood. [Divine] Love, in fact, is The Vocation which includes all others; It is

a universe of its Own, comprising all time and space - it is Eternal!"

[St. Therese of Liseaux]

I JOHN 4:8b-9

...GOD is Love. By This The Love of GOD was manifested in us, that GOD has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

6. WHAT IS A "SAINT" IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

CCC 828 – By canonizing some of the faithful, i.e., by solemnly proclaiming that they practiced heroic virtue and lived in fidelity to God's Grace, The Church recognizes the power of The Spirit of Holiness within Her and sustains the hope of believers by proposing the Saints to them as models and intercessors...

All Christians are called to be saints. Saints are persons in Heaven (officially canonized or not), who lived heroically virtuous lives, offered their life for others, or were martyred for The Faith, and who are worthy of imitation.

In official Church procedures since 1234, there are three steps to sainthood: a candidate becomes "Venerable," then "Blessed" and then "Saint:"

Venerable is the title given to a deceased person recognized formally by The Pope as having lived a heroically virtuous life or offered their life [for others].

To be beatified and recognized as a Blessed, one miracle acquired through the candidate's intercession is required in addition to recognition of heroic virtue or offering of life.

Canonization [for Sainthood] requires a second miracle after beatification.

The Pope may waive these requirements. A miracle is not required prior to a Martyr's beatification, but one is required before canonization.

["Saints." Introduction. U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. Retrieved

6/09/2020.

<http://www.usccb.org/.../backgrounders/saints-backgrounder.cfm>]

7. THE OF DEGREES OF RECOGNIZED SAINTHOOD

A sinless life not possible for any man. But a life growing in the heroic virtues and growing in holiness in The Grace of GOD through JESUS CHRIST is possible for all men:

A. Servant of GOD

**an exemplary life of holy Christian virtues

**a case being examined by The Congregation for The Causes of Saints @ Vatican.

B. Venerable

**5 years after death, nothing hinders the cause

**a holy virtuous life that is a testimony for CHRIST to others;

**i.e., proof of a life of heroic virtues; exemplary Christian life

C. Blessed/Beatified

**often martyrdom for The Faith

**a living example of The Beatitudes of CHRIST

**one verified postmortem miracle that results from praying for the candidate's intercession

D. Saint/Canonization

**a second postmortem miracle with all above

**a deceased Catholic whose holy soul is understood to be in closer proximity to our Lord JESUS CHRIST and Holy Mary, whom faithful Catholics may venerate

["4 Steps to Sainthood" Catholic Doors Ministry. Retrieved 6/09/2020. <http://www.catholicdoors.com/faq/qu221.htm>]

8. THE JOURNEY OF HOLINESS FOR ALL MEN

...The Catholic Church canonizes or beatifies only those whose lives have been marked by the exercise of heroic virtue, and only after this has been proved by common repute for sanctity and by conclusive arguments. The

chief difference, however, lies in the meaning of the term canonization, The Church, seeing in the Saints nothing more than friends and servants of GOD, whose holy lives have made them worthy of His special Love. She does not pretend to make gods.

[“Beautification and Canonization,” History, para 2. Catholic Encyclopedia. Retrieved 6/09/2020.

<https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02364b.htm>]

So having lived earthly lives of holy exemplary virtues and fidelity to GOD's Grace within The Catholic Church, The Saints are understood as in Heaven in closer proximity to The LORD, enabling us to ask for their intercession with GOD on our behalf, whose prayers are deemed more effective and meritorious. The Perfect Example: Holy Mary.

9. WHAT WAS VENERABLE FR. MCGIVNEY’S FIRST CONFIRMED MIRACLE?

In 2015, a family prayed to Fr. McGivney for his intercession for healing of an unborn child with a life threatening condition, which resulted in a complete and verified miraculous cure, concluded so by The Congregation for The Causes of The Saints of The Catholic Church.

[“Miracle Approved – Fr. McGivney to be Beatified!” Knightline, Volume 38, Number 4, May 30, 2020.

[https://www.fathermcgivney.org/.../michael-mcgivney-closer-to... \]](https://www.fathermcgivney.org/.../michael-mcgivney-closer-to...)

10. A SAINT’S PATH TO HOLINESS IN SCRIPTURE

MATTHEW 5:3-12 - to be living Beatitudes of CHRIST

1-2 When JESUS saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is The Kingdom of Heaven.

4 Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be

satisfied.

7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

8 Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see GOD.

9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of GOD.

10 Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is The Kingdom of Heaven.

11 Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of Me.

12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in Heaven. For so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

PSALM 29:11 – The LORD blesses with Peace

May The LORD give might to His people; may The LORD bless His people with peace!

JOHN 14:27 – Divine Peace only in JESUS CHRIST

[JESUS CHRIST says,] Peace I leave with you; My Peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

II THESSALONIANS 3:16 – His Peace sanctifies us to greater holiness

May the Lord of Peace Himself give you Peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

ACTS 4:12 – Salvation & eternal life only via JESUS CHRIST

There is no salvation through anyone else, nor is there any other name under heaven given to the human race by which we are to be saved

11. IN REVIEW

The Pope is preparing to declare Venerable Fr. Michael McGivney - founder of the mutual aid fraternity The Knights of Columbus - a Catholic parish Priest who died in 1890 caring for victims of a pandemic, as "Blessed."

Categories of recognized progressive sainthood by The Church, to which all men are called, include "Servant of GOD," then after 5 years of consideration by The Church "Venerable," then with 1 proven miracle of

intercession beatified as "Blessed," then with 2 miracles canonized a "Saint." The path of salvation to eternal life in JESUS CHRIST calls us all to grow in becoming living Beatitudes of our Lord.

The road to holiness for us all, through The Cross of The Son of GOD, whether formally declared a "Saint" or not, is: 1. to live lives of heroic virtue; 2. to live in faithfulness to The Grace of GOD within The Church; 3. and/or for some martyrdom for The Faith.

Guided and infused by The HOLY SPIRIT, the heroic Christian virtues include temperance (moderation & self-control); prudence (wisdom); justice (righteousness); fortitude (courage); faith (firm belief); hope (confident expectation); love (charity & self-giving). The first four virtues all men of good will may attain. The last three virtues are found only by Faith in JESUS CHRIST.

12. QUESTIONS TO PONDER - SO WHAT NOW?

How can we grow in sanctity, and aide the coming of GOD's Kingdom on earth as in Heaven, by following Venerable Fr. McGivney's example as he followed JESUS CHRIST?

How can we grow in daily holiness as Christians, as servants of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, The Catholic Church and Knights of Columbus, that we may be a blessing to others and give glory to GOD?

How does the testimony of faith in our daily lives draw others to our Lord and His faithful Church?

What is the heroic Christian virtuous life our Lord calls us to in moderation, prudence, righteousness, fortitude, faith, hope and love?

How can we model our own lives more on that of Venerable Fr. McGivney to find GOD's Peace, and be filled with charity for others and even ourselves?

How can we follow Venerable Fr. McGivney to grow in service and caring as he did, encourage others around us to do the same, and come home to The Catholic Church in particular?

In this time of pandemic and civil unrest, how do the heroic Christian virtues, poured out into us by The HOLY SPIRIT, help bring GOD's Peace for ourselves, families, friends, The Church, civil society, nation and the world?

-Robert Baral. 6/11/2020.