

Holy Role Models: How to Choose a Confirmation Saint

By Bill

St. Francis of Assisi: A famous man who dedicated his life to the service of God. He founded the largest order in the world, had the stigmata, and could talk to animals. The funny thing is, I had no idea who Francis really was and how thankful I was I had picked him until over 20 years after I picked him as my Confirmation saint. Looking back, I wish I would have taken my saint choice more seriously. I thought I was simply picking a famous Saint for, well whatever, a patron saint, whatever that meant. Although I had good intentions, I didn't understand that I was picking a saint as a model of holiness and asking him to intercede for me on my faith journey.

For your Confirmation prep class, you know (I hope) that you have to do a couple of things: pick a sponsor, pick a saint, write a letter to the Bishop, and survive an interview. Let's focus on the second picking a saint. A Confirmation saint isn't just something the Church made up to keep you busy during your preparation for the Sacrament; it actually serves a purpose.

Throughout Scripture we see numerous examples of people who had their names changed. Abram to Abraham. Jacob to Israel. Simon to Peter. Why would God change their names? Weren't the old ones good enough? Whenever we see someone's name change in Scripture, we also see that they receive a new identity. They become a new person. God gives them a specific task for their life.

Whether you remember or not, you experienced receiving a new name. When you were baptized, the priest (or deacon) asked your parents, "What name do you give this child?" This name became your Christian identity. Naming you in the Church gave you a new identity and through the waters of Baptism you too became a new person. In the Sacrament of Confirmation, the Bishop asks for your name. At this moment he is recalling your baptismal name as a sign of your Christian identity.

You might ask, "If I received a name at Baptism, why do I need a saint's name for Confirmation?"

Great question. Saints are models of holiness for us. They had extraordinary faith in God. They trusted in God's plan and followed his plan *at all costs*. They have lived a life worthy of heaven and are now with God forever. We adopt their name – a sign of living a life like they did – and ask them to pray for us during our own faith journey. Your Confirmation name *must* be a saint's name. If your baptismal name is a saint's name (like mine – William) you can use it as your Confirmation name too. Using the same name can be very meaningful, because it recalls your baptism as well. Or you can get another Saint in your court.

Okay, so the big question... *HOW do you pick a saint?* I don't have any special formula for you, just a few words of advice.

Pray You are asking a saint to be a part of your life *forever*. Take some time to think and pray about a few things. What kind of role model are you looking for? What qualities do they have that you want? What kind of person are you hoping to become? Choose a saint that you can identify with. Pick a few different saints and then spend time in prayer and ask all of them to pray for you. You might find one begins to stick out more than the others.

Read After you've taken time to pray about it, do some reading. There are plenty of books and websites out there that will give you information on saints. The Church has a saint for almost anything you can think of. That being said... don't just pick a saint because they can levitate or bi-locate or read people's thoughts. Asking St. Padre Pio to pray for you to gain the ability to bi-locate is not the point. Choose someone you feel like you can identify with that has the qualities of holiness you truly desire.

Ask Talk to your parents, youth minister, pastor, or siblings about their Confirmation saints. Why did they pick them? Do they have any special devotion to a saint? Who would they pick for you? Asking those who know you best can help you find a saint you can really rely on for your whole life.

Not sure where to start looking for a Confirmation Saint? Check out these websites for ideas!

<http://www.catholic.org/saints/> <http://www.catholic-saints.info/>