

# Catholic

## UPDATE

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## Saint Carlo Acutis

### FROM CODING TO CANONIZATION

A REDEMPTORIST PASTORAL PUBLICATION

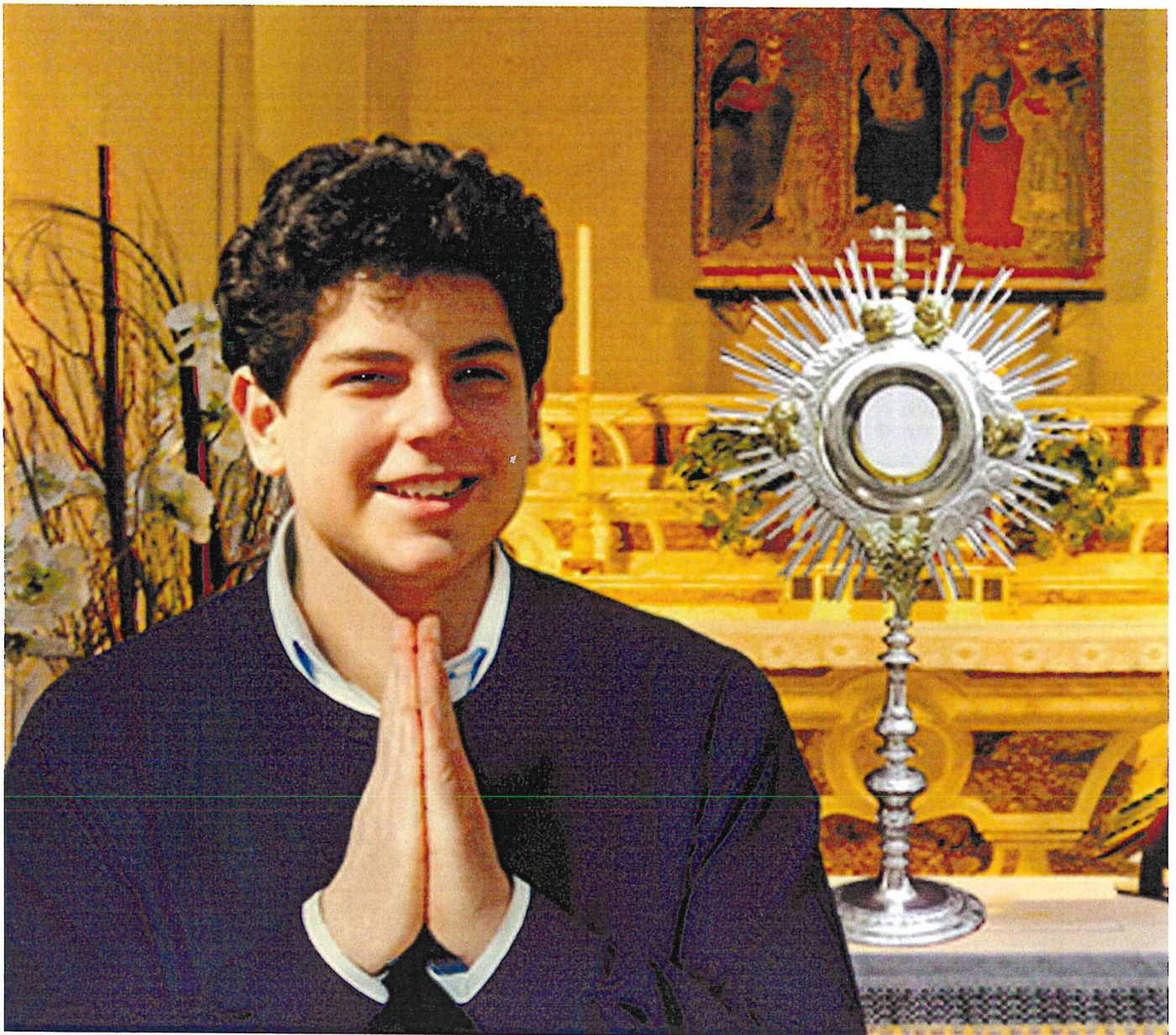





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# The Life of Saint Carlo Acutis


 Carlo Acutis was born on May 3, 1991, in London to parents Andrea Acutis and Antonia Salzano. They moved to Milan, Italy, when Carlo was still a baby.


 Diagnosed with leukemia as a teenager, Carlo died in 2006, when he was only fifteen. Before he died, he said, “I offer all of my suffering to the Lord for the pope and for the Church in order not to go to purgatory but to go straight to heaven.”

 When Carlo was younger, his parents were not very faithful Catholics. His mother admitted that she had gone to Mass only for her first Communion, her confirmation, and her wedding. Carlo was very devout, even as a young boy, and eventually inspired his parents to attend Mass every day. His mother recalled that Carlo would say, “There are queues in front of a concert, in front of a football match, but I don’t see these queues in front of the Blessed Sacrament.”


 His parents weren’t the only adults inspired by Carlo’s devotion. A well-educated Hindu, Rajesh Mohur, traveled from India to Italy to find work and became employed by the Acutis family as an au pair for young Carlo. Mohur was confused by Carlo’s attention to a poor man named Mateo, who begged outside the cathedral. Once, when Mohur referred to Mateo as a “tramp,” Carlo chided him, saying, “We are all creatures of the Lord.” Together, they helped Mateo get enough to eat. Mohur was so touched by how young Carlo treated the poor with dignity—an attitude that seemed to be related to his devotion to the Eucharist—that he was inspired to request baptism. And when Mohur’s mother visited him, she also was moved to become a Catholic. “That was Carlo’s magic,” Mohur said. “He could convert me and my mom, too.”




 Carlo knew how to be a good friend. He defended those who were being bullied, especially children with disabilities. A friend whose parents were getting divorced became a special concern of Carlo’s, and he often invited his friend to eat with the Acutis family. Carlo was not afraid to talk about his faith with his peers. Some of his classmates testified that Carlo, during a lesson in school, once argued passionately for the protection of life from conception.

 Carlo was born the same year the World Wide Web was introduced. He liked video games but allowed himself only one hour per week to play them, because he had read about children who became addicted to these games. He taught himself coding and developed a website that became a tool for religious instruction in parishes

all over the world. He cataloged more than 150 miracles, presenting them in many languages. His intention was to help people realize that Jesus was truly present in the Eucharist and to encourage people to come back to Mass. This is why St. Carlo Acutis is known as the “Patron Saint of the Internet” and “God’s Influencer.”

 Carlo died on October 12, 2006. His body now lies in a glass tomb in Assisi, where thousands come to pray. He is wearing a tracksuit jacket, jeans, and Nike sneakers.

 Carlo Acutis became Blessed Carlo Acutis when he was beatified by Pope Francis on October 10, 2020. His canonization date is April 27, 2025, a highlight of the Jubilee of Adolescents during the Holy Year.

## The Miracles of Carlo Acutis

*Two verified miracles are required for canonization*

**First Miracle** Matheus Vianna, a little boy born in Brazil in 2009, suffered from a rare condition called annular pancreas. He vomited continually, and the only food he could tolerate was a vitamin-protein shake. In 2013, at four years old, Matheus weighed only 20 pounds and was in constant pain. The same year, Catholic priest Fr. Marcelo Tenorio, a friend of Matheus’ family, began praying for Carlo Acutis’ beatification and received a relic from Carlo’s mother. Fr. Tenorio held a Mass and prayer service in his parish, inviting Catholics to attend and ask for Carlo’s intercession for healing. Matheus, his mother, and other family members attended, and little Matheus prayed that he would “stop vomiting so much.” As they left the church, Matheus said he felt healed and asked for his brothers’ favorite foods: rice, beans, French fries, and steak. He was fine after eating the meal and has been able to eat normally since then. The miracle was recognized in 2020, and, on October 10, 2020, Carlo Acutis was declared Blessed.

**Second Miracle** On July 2, 2022, a young woman from Costa Rica named Valeria fell off her bike in Florence, Italy, and suffered a brain injury. After craniotomy surgery, she was placed on a ventilator, and her doctors were not optimistic that she would survive. Several days later, Valeria’s mother traveled from Costa Rica to Assisi to pray at Blessed Carlo Acutis’ tomb. She left a letter in which she described her daughter’s situation and prayed for her recovery. That same day, July 8, Valeria began to breathe on her own. Within a month, her brain hemorrhage stopped, she started speaking again, and she began rehabilitation therapy. On September 2, 2022, Valeria and her mother visited the tomb of Blessed Carlo Acutis to thank him for his intercession.



# The Journey to Sainthood

*The process of becoming a canonized saint is rigorous*

When you enter the gates of heaven, you become a saint—and people on earth won't know a thing about it. A canonized saint is someone whom the Church officially recognizes as being in heaven and about whom the pope makes a definitive statement that he or she lived a life of extraordinarily heroic Christian virtue, was either martyred or can be personally linked to two miracles rendered by God through his or her intercession, and is worthy of veneration. Saints are not divine. They are human beings, attractive to us precisely because they are human and therefore familiar. A mother can speak to another mother, like Mary, because she feels that Mary will understand her. A father looks at Mary's husband, Joseph, and sees that he, too, shared heavy daily burdens. Because saints are familiar and approachable, nearly every land, ethnicity, profession, and even hobby has a patron saint to turn to for aid. The saints can bring our prayers and petitions to God, and sometimes God works miracles or grants petitions through their intercession.

The process toward official recognition as a saint by the Catholic Church begins five years after the person dies. While this waiting period can be waived by the pope, it is rarely done. The only recent examples are Pope Saint John Paul II and Saint Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa).



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## Servant of God

At least five years after the person's death, the local bishop may open the cause, and the individual is declared a "Servant of God." The bishop appoints a *postulator*, who leads an investigation into the life of the person, examining spoken and written words and eyewitness reports. Evidence is gathered and sent to Rome, where the cause is assigned a *relator* in the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The evidence is examined, and a document—called a *positio*—is prepared, outlining both "people evidence," such as eyewitness accounts, and "paper evidence," which re-examines the candidate's trail of words. At this point, a *promoter of the faith* plays a key role. Once referred to as *the devil's advocate* because proof of the person's sanctity was demanded, now the approach is "prove why this person is not a saint."

**"To be always united with Jesus, this is my plan of life."**

—Carlo Acutis

Pictured at right: The body of Carlo Acutis, who died in 2006, entombed in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Assisi, Italy

## Venerable

Once the life of the Servant of God has been examined, and the pope receives the evidence that the person lived a life of heroic virtue, that person is declared "Venerable."

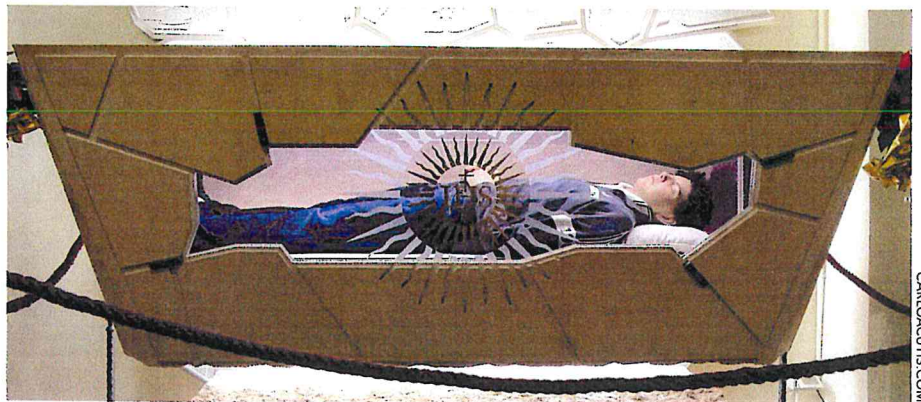
## Blessed

For the Venerable to be beatified—declared "Blessed"—a miracle is required. (In the case of a martyr, no miracle is required because the person's heroic death is witness enough.) Today, that miracle is typically a medical cure. It must be proved that God healed someone who had prayed to the person for aid. (Church teaching is that candidates for sainthood and saints do not heal; God heals in response to their intercession.) Scientific and medical experts must prove that there is no explanation for the cure other than a miraculous one. As the investigation

proceeds, a panel of cardinals and bishops makes a recommendation to the pope, who can accept their opinion, reject it, or return it for more study. When a pope decides to beatify a person, his or her tomb is opened, and relics are gathered. Public veneration is then permitted, although it is usually true that people have already been praying privately to the candidate for a long time.

## Saint

A second miracle is required for the candidate to be eligible for canonization, or declaration of sainthood. Sainthood brings another formal ceremony and usually a broader celebration throughout the Church of the saint's feast day, assigned at the beatification stage.



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# Nine Days of Prayer for Young People

## DAY 1 Appearances

*God created mankind in his image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them (Genesis 1:27).*

Each person on this earth presents a different face of God. Whether attractive or not by the world's changing standards of beauty, every face is a glorious image of the unseen God.

*Lord and Brother Jesus, may I show your face to everyone I meet and be a shining example of your love for this world.*

*Saint Carlo Acutis, pray for us.*

## DAY 2 Friendships

*Encourage one another and build one another up (1 Thessalonians 5:11).*

Many people are lonely, even in a crowd, and long for just one person to reach out to them. Be that person.

*Lord and Brother Jesus, grant me the grace to be a good, trustworthy, available friend. Saint Carlo Acutis, pray for us.*

## DAY 3 Family

*Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another... And be thankful (Colossians 3:12–13, 15b).*

So often we take for granted those to whom we owe our very lives. No one is perfect. Try to be patient with the quirks and imperfections of loved ones. And, once in a while, tell them “thank you!”

*Lord and Brother Jesus, help me to love my family as they are and be grateful that they love me. Saint Carlo Acutis, pray for us.*

## DAY 4 Learning

*Do not be wise in your own estimation (Romans 12:16b).*

There is always more to learn. We can learn even when the subject is of no interest to us, or the teacher is

not gifted, or we're tired or hungry or distracted. We can always learn!

*Lord and Brother Jesus, open my mind to be curious about this wonderful world and inspired to make this world better.*

*Saint Carlo Acutis, pray for us.*

## DAY 5 Technology

*Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and pleasing and perfect (Romans 12:2).*

Our screens can be instruments of connection or isolation—means of engaging with the wisdom of the ages or sources of distraction, temptation, and immorality.

*Lord and Brother Jesus, help me live this one precious life on earth and become the person I was created to be. Saint Carlo Acutis, pray for us.*

## DAY 6 Healthy Habits

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you...? Therefore, glorify God in your body (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).*

Our bodies are gifts from God, and caring for them requires planning: making preparations to eat healthy food, scheduling enough exercise and rest, and knowing how to respond when tempted to unhealthy behavior.

*Lord and Brother Jesus, grant me the strength to lead an energetic life, avoid that which is harmful, and be a good example to others. Saint Carlo Acutis, pray for us.*

## DAY 7 Dating

*Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, virtue with knowledge, knowledge with self-control, self-control with endurance, endurance with devotion, devotion with mutual affection, mutual affection with love (2 Peter 1:5–7).*

Young people often feel a kind of urgency when it comes to relationships. Some feel lonely or fear being alone

forever. Physical urges are often intense and seem to have a life of their own. Building a healthy, long-lasting relationship requires conscious effort and time.

*Lord and Brother Jesus, help me to grow in faith and be a person who thinks of the well-being of others, especially those with whom I seek a special relationship. Saint Carlo Acutis, pray for us.*

## DAY 8 Church

*We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works. We should not stay away from our assembly, as is the custom of some, but encourage one another, and this all the more as you see the day drawing near (Hebrews 10:24–25).*

We are not always aware of it, but we need our faith community, and our faith community needs us. We're not supposed to go it alone. Jesus created a community of disciples, and only in our prayer together do we understand what it is to live a holy life, to serve others, and to build the kingdom.

*Lord and Brother Jesus, thank you for your Church. Forgive me when I have chosen to ignore your community and help me to faithfully pray, confess my sins, and receive the gift of the Eucharist. Saint Carlo Acutis, pray for us.*

## DAY 9 Future

*If it is displeasing to you to serve the LORD, choose today whom you will serve... As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Joshua 24:15).*

Every day, we make choices. And those choices form our future. Whom we serve today is likely to be whom we will serve tomorrow. Make good choices today.

*Lord and Brother Jesus, live in me that I may choose what you would choose, be who I was intended to be, and become the person God created me to become. Saint Carlo Acutis, pray for us.*