

Lives of the Saints: From Mary and St. Francis of Assisi to John XXIII and Mother Teresa

By Richard P. McBrien



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Sales Rank: #587939 in eBooks
Published on: 2015-12-15
Released on: 2015-12-15
Format: Kindle eBook



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Lives of the Saints is a go-get-it-now book, an I've-been-waiting-for-this book, a thank-God-it's-on-goodpaper-cause-I'll-still-be-reading-this-10-years-from-now book. Believers are drawn to saints because their witness and their teachings are inseparable: saints are the ones who lived what they believed. And we hope that, by learning about saints and meditating upon them, our own beliefs and actions will become more integrated. Author Richard McBrien, a professor of theology at the University of Notre Dame and author of the equally indispensable *Lives of the Popes*, is particularly interested in the relationship between the lives of individual saints and the life of the Church. In his preface to Lives of the Saints, and in its excellent essays about the history of sainthood, veneration, and the process of canonization, he repeatedly asks: "What do the saints tell us, individually and collectively, not only about the character of Christian discipleship, but about the meaning of human existence itself? And what does the action of the Church in proclaiming or canonizing various types of Christians as saints disclose about the fundamental religious values of the Church itself?" Lives of the Saints also includes biographical sketches organized by feast day (January 1 is Mary, Mother of God; December 31 is Pope Sylvester I). The book's clear structure and simple style ensure that it will serve many readers' needs: it may be used as a reference or as a devotional, or it may be read straight through. In any case, it will help Christians (or any interested reader) address what McBrien calls "the question of sanctity," a question that lies at the heart of all of our lives: "In what does a human life fully consist?" he asks. "What does it mean not only to be 'good,' but to be 'really good,' even outstandingly so?" --Michael Joseph Gross

From Publishers Weekly

Eminent historian of Catholicism McBrien (Catholicism) provides in his new book the same lively, detailed historical and theological sketches of the saints that he did for the papacy in his earlier The Lives of the Popes. In magisterial fashion, he discusses the definition of sainthood, the process of canonization and its politics and the significant contributions that various saints have made to Christian history. McBrien defines saints as "ordinary people who happen to live the gospel in extraordinary ways." Arranged according to the yearly calendar, the central section of the book offers fresh and engaging biographical sketches of the saints. In addition to officially recognized saints, McBrien embraces a wide range of individuals who fit his broad definition of sainthood, such as Dorothy Day, George Herbert, John Donne, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Mohandas Gandhi. The book includes a helpful time line of saints in history and exhaustive tables of the feast days of the saints, places and their patron saints, patron saints and the groups and causes that adopt them, emblems in art and iconography, saintly "firsts," and papal canonizations. For instance, we learn that Thomas Aquinas is one of the patron saints of booksellers, and Clare of Assisi is the patron saint of television. McBrien's magnificent and comprehensive compendium offers rich insights not only into the lives of the saints but also into the reasons that these fascinating holy people continue to play such an integral role in the history of Christianity.

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From Library Journal

A worthy companion to McBrien's Lives of the Popes (LJ 10/15/97), this work goes beyond the Roman Catholic Church's list of saints to include those of the Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran churches. Concise and well-researched biographical sketches are arranged by feast days, with access provided by indexes for

saints, personal names, and subjects. Complementing the biographies are thoughtful essays on the history of saints, their place in religious history, and canonization; a series of seven tables on feast days, patron saints, iconography, and papal canonization; a glossary; and a brief, annotated bibliography. This useful compendium is recommended for academic and public libraries. Jan Blodgett, Davidson Coll. Lib., NC Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mary Muncy:

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to perform! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic inside the park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your personal free time/ holiday? May be reading a book could be option to fill your free of charge time/ holiday. The first thing you will ask may be what kinds of book that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the publication untitled Lives of the Saints: From Mary and St. Francis of Assisi to John XXIII and Mother Teresa can be good book to read. May be it is usually best activity to you.

Jason Serrano:

Reading can called imagination hangout, why? Because if you are reading a book especially book entitled Lives of the Saints: From Mary and St. Francis of Assisi to John XXIII and Mother Teresa the mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every aspect that maybe unknown for but surely will end up your mind friends. Imaging every word written in a publication then become one web form conclusion and explanation that will maybe you never get ahead of. The Lives of the Saints: From Mary and St. Francis of Assisi to John XXIII and Mother Teresa giving you a different experience more than blown away your mind but also giving you useful info for your better life in this era. So now let us present to you the relaxing pattern at this point is your body and mind will likely be pleased when you are finished looking at it, like winning a casino game. Do you want to try this extraordinary investing spare time activity?

Dale Randolph:

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Owen Neri:

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