

# I'm so busy. How can I grow and become a saint?

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**Q: I really want to grow. I mean, I really want to become the person that God has called me to be, but I find myself being so busy that I can't imagine adding more to my plate in order to be a saint. How can I fit more in?**

A: Thank you so much for writing and for your question. First, you have the correct goal: You know that you are called to be a saint. To be anything else is to fail permanently. I know that is quite the claim, but consider the words of Jesus: "What does it profit a person to gain the whole world and lose their soul?" (Mark 8:36). Apparently, you and Jesus are on the same page (which is a very good page to be on).

But to move forward, it will be very important to keep a few things in mind.

First, what is a saint? A saint is not someone who has accomplished a certain task, has certain gifts, or has achieved a certain notoriety. Most saints live what look like ordinary lives, without any distinguishing gifts or abilities, and are lacking popular recognition. A saint is



merely someone who does God's will. St. Maximillian Kolbe put it like this: "When one's will is the same as God's Will, then one is holy." This doesn't mean that a person is perfect or that they are an expert at every task in their life. It does not mean that they never fail. But it does mean that they continually return to the Lord regardless of victory or defeat.

The late Father Benedict Groeschel said that "a saint is a person who says yes to God ... and who never stops saying yes." While this means many things, one of the things it highlights is that a person can always choose to be a saint. Even if they have sinned. Because what is the call from the Lord to every person who has sinned? God calls every person, virtuous or vicious, heroic or sinful, to let themselves be loved by him. Therefore, if a person is without sin, they are called to say "yes" to God and continue to walk in his grace. And if a person has sinned, they are called to say "yes" to God's invitation to repent, go to confession, and walk in his grace. Our answer to God is always "yes." This is sanctity. Nothing more and nothing less.

And yet, God doesn't just call us to have the "feeling" of saying yes — or the sentiment of walking with him. He wants us to actually say yes to his invitations to live out our relationship with him. This means spending time with him in prayer, participating actively in the sacraments, growing daily in living a life of virtue, and actively loving the people around us. And all of those things take energy, attention, and time.

This is actually very practical. We all know that love requires energy, attention, and time. Without these three, there really isn't the possibility of love existing, much less growing and flourishing. We love what we give our heart to; which is to say that we love what we give our energy, attention, and time to. A person cannot say that they love their spouse if they do not give their spouse their energy, attention, and time. The same is true for our relationship with God.

If a person had the situation where their lives were so full that they did not have room for their spouse, they would be forced to ask themselves a question: "Do I love my schedule and the life I have created for myself or do I love my spouse?" And then they would have to make changes. Time and attention and energy are limited resources. I can only give myself away to a limited number of things and people. I will need to make a choice. And so will you. If I love God, then He gets my energy, attention, and time.

Now, this means that I have to say "no" to other things. That isn't me being mean. It is just the truth; if I only have \$5, I can't buy both the medium latte and the Jimmy John's sandwich. I have to choose between them.

And yet.

God is so good that he is calling us to say yes to him (to love him) in the midst of the life we are currently living. This is connected to something called the "sacrament of the present moment." God is present at every moment and in every place. He is actively loving us at



every moment and in every place. Because of this, we can grow in holiness (we can give him our heart — our energy, attention, and time) by simply recognizing that every moment is a gift from God and can be a gift back to God.

Yes, there are some things in our lives that will have to be discarded (repentance, after all, requires some real change), but God chooses to work out the extraordinary process of sanctification through ordinary means. This is not something that I am making up, this is the wisdom of the saints. Father Jean-Pierre de Caussade put it like this: “Would to God that ... all men could know how very easy it would be for them to arrive at a high degree of sanctity. They would only have to fulfill the simple duties of Christianity and of their state in life; to embrace with submission the crosses belonging to that state, and to submit with faith and love to the designs of Providence in all those things that have to be done or suffered without going out of their way to seek occasions for themselves.”