



From the Pastor's Desk:

Pontiff Calls Youth to the "Heroism of Sanctity"

VATICAN CITY, FEB. 3, 2010 ([Zenit.org](http://www.zenit.org)).- Benedict XVI today pointed to the testimony of martyrs and invited youth to open their hearts to the "heroism of sanctity."

In his traditional greeting to young people, the sick and newlyweds at the end of the general audience, the Pope noted the group of martyrs being celebrated by the liturgy this week. Today's memorial is that of St. Blaise and there are upcoming commemorations of St. Agatha on Friday and St. Paul Miki and his companions on Saturday.

"May the courage of these heroic witnesses of Christ help you, dear young people, to open your hearts to the heroism of sanctity," the Holy Father said.

How many times have you, or any of us, thought of our spiritual lives in the context of the "Heroism of Sanctity". Military, police and firemen get medals for heroism. We understand and applaud these people. The heroism of sanctity is precisely what lies beneath these heroic act. There is a power greater than ourselves we call "God". This power created each of us with the strength to see danger or a serious need and to respond immediately with courage and determination to rescue or save a person from sudden danger or death. This is not just a shot of adrenalin that surges through our bodies, it is a conviction of the sacredness of human life, in fact, all life. These are action that align themselves with holiness and sanctify. But you don't have to save a person's life to be a hero. There is something even greater than life that you and I are called to save and that is our immortal soul.

Saving our souls often calls for heroic action. Sometimes dealing with the temptations and casual attitudes of the world takes heroic acts of virtue. Being pure and chaste takes courage and a deep appreciation for the sanctity of human life, all life, my life, his life, her life. Being compassionate and loving takes patience and a deep understanding of the struggles of the human heart. Being Christ like takes the willingness to surrender ourselves and place our sinfulness of the world we live in and the need to stay involved with the development of our spiritual lives to achieve the sanctity Pope Benedict sets forth as a challenge to all youth.

Saints like Blaze, Agatha and Paul Mike and his companions had no choice but to live their lives being the men and women God called them to be. They were not born free of original sin. They were baptized and set free from original sin. They lived in the midst of a sinful world that refused to accept their "heroic sanctity" and preferred to murder them thinking that death would eradicate the "heroism of sanctity" from the face of the earth. But each of their lives has affected the lives of millions of people throughout the world by the example of their lives. Blaze would give up his life in defense of the faith; Agatha would have her breasts cut off rather than defile her body by the sexual advances of a man; and, Paul Miki and his companions would be tied and dragged from Tokyo to Nagasaki, more than 400 miles, mocked and finally crucified and lanced until they died.

If they could be so courageous in such extreme circumstances so can we. Like them we have the same Christ who fills us with the Holy Spirit whose gifts of wisdom, understanding, fortitude, knowledge, counsel, piety and fear of the Lord are the same gifts that the Holy Martyrs used to achieve the "Heroism of Sanctity". All you need to do is believe and do it.

May God +bless you, and yours, now and forever.

Father Anthony