

1st Married Couple Canonized Together: A Symbol of the Family and Marital Fidelity



On Sunday, October 18, 2015, Saints Louis and Zélie Martin, the parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, became the first married couple to be canonized together. The tapestry shown here of Saints Louis and Zélie Martin was hung in St. Peter's Square in celebration of their canonization.

Why are these saints so important to families at this time?

"They help us. They are example to us to keep going, to love God," Andrzej from Łódź in Poland explained. "We need some figures like this to help us carry our cross," his wife Alicja said. She explained that she and her husband Andrzej had lost a daughter in childbirth last summer. Although the Martins experienced "the joy of giving birth to nine children, four died in childhood." However, **"neither grief nor trials weakened their deep faith, sustained by the daily attendance at Mass and filial devotion to the Virgin Mary."** The Martins turned to their faith, to their love of God and the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary in their trials as parents. Their witness inspired married couples today to do the same.

Hedy from Germany related that she has been bearing a great cross, practicing her Christian faith amidst rampant secularism. **"I like that a couple in love are saints,"** she laughed, "maybe I can get that." Often we, as Catholics, forget that all of us are aspiring to sainthood. In the words of Fr. Larry Richards: "Either we are going to be saints, or we are going to hell." The alternatives, standing still in lukewarm faith or not practicing our faith at all, lead us backwards toward the devil, not forward toward God and life eternal with Him. Sts. Louis and Zélie Martin show us that **we CAN be saints within the vocation of married life** by carrying our daily cross as a spouse and parent, offering our trials as St. Thérèse of Lisieux did, for the salvation of all souls, and **teaching our children to love God, through word and action. As the first and most important teachers of the faith, parents are the Domestic Church.**

An anonymous marketing professional from Paris said he and his wife were drawn to the canonization in Rome by the witness of the Martins' family life. **"They are real people," he said, but, "they lived their faith with joy."**

Family Prayers

Upon the conclusion of the rite of canonization, Pope Francis recited the Angelus in Latin and imparted his Apostolic blessing. Thomas from New York recalled how "we prayed the Angelus in my family at home when I was growing up." Now, he is studying in Rome as a lay student, and he continues to recite the prayer daily (though traditionally prayed at 6:00 AM, 12:00 noon, and 6:00 PM, this prayer can be said at any time of day). **"It just awes me how the Martins probably said that same prayer in their house and now they're all like basically saints," he commented. "I guess it just goes to show how a family that prays together stays together even in heaven."**

Most of this article was taken directly from or paraphrased from the *National Catholic Register* article "Newly Canonized Saints of the Family Inspire the Faithful in St. Peter's Square". To read the article in its entirety, go to: <http://www.ncregister.com/daily-news/newly-canonized-saints-of-the-family-inspire-the-faithful-in-st.-peters-squ/#ixzz3oxEULiPe>

For the details of the miracle that led to the canonization of Louis and Zélie Martin, go to the *Catholic News Agency* article "The Miracle Behind the Canonization of the Parents of St. Thérèse of Lisieux" <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/the-miracle-behind-the-canonization-of-the-parents-of-st-therese-of-lisieux-60296/>