



We wish you a blessed and joyful Advent and Christmas season!

**For the second year in a row, Catholic Social Services has chosen a Patron Saint of the Year.** The CSS team offered thoughtful and inspiring nominations, each reflecting how the saints have embodied the works of mercy throughout history (**Who did we pick? More on that later!**). As their leader, I was moved to see how deeply our team identifies with the mission of serving the poor and vulnerable — striving, in their own way, toward sainthood. Shouldn't we all?

In the months following the canonizations of St. Pier Giorgio Frassati and St. Carlo Acutis, we are ever more aware of God calling us to sainthood and the attainment of it if we chose to live for Christ.



If we choose to live for Christ.

**But how, you may ask. How can we live for Christ amid an increasingly secular culture?**

The Advent and Christmas seasons are quickly approaching. It seems like our “increasingly secular culture” has been pushing Christmas on us since shortly after Labor Day- and all but ignores Advent. **How can we swim against the tide and live for Christ in this culture? We can turn to the saints.**

The saints show us that holiness isn't reserved for a few — it's a daily choice. Let's look at how they lived this out and how we can follow their example, especially this time of year:

**St. Teresa of Calcutta** experienced prolonged periods of desolation feeling distant, even abandonment from God. Yet when that occurred or when any of her fellow Sisters of Charity experienced periods of despair, she turned toward our Eucharistic Lord. ***This Advent, spend time in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.***

**St. Andrew the Apostle** was one of the first to recognize and follow Jesus. He made the invitation to his brother, Simon Peter, who went on to be the rock upon which our Church was built. ***Invite a friend to join you at Mass, a Holy Hour, or Advent service.***

**St. Veronica** could not stop the crucifixion, but she could ease Christ's suffering with a simple act of love. Likewise, we can't eliminate all suffering — but we can meet it with compassion. ***Keep a protein bar, a bottle of water or gloves and a winter hat in your car to offer to someone in need who is out in the cold winter weather.***

**Venerable Pierre Toussaint** was born into slavery in Haiti in 1766 and gained his freedom after arriving in New York. He dedicated his life to the works of mercy. He sheltered orphans, nursed the sick during epidemics, and supported numerous Catholic institutions. He helped finance the construction of St. Patrick's Old Cathedral and supported New York City's first Catholic orphanage. ***Make a sacrificial donation to a charity you are passionate about this Advent or Christmas.***

**St. Joseph** labored for his family building a safe and joyful home for the Holy Family. He disappears from the narrative once Jesus is grown, suggesting he lived not for himself, but for God's mission. ***Meditate on the Holy Family's flight into Egypt.***

(Over)

These holy men and women were once in our shoes – tired, overwhelmed, burdened with doubts, and faced with daily responsibilities. **Yet through it all, they chose to live for Christ. And so can we.**

At Catholic Social Services, we strive to live for Christ by living out the works of mercy each day. You too, can join this mission – through prayer, volunteering, or by offering financial support. **Together, may we answer God’s call to serve with joy and humility.**

As we prepare for and celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, may we be reminded of the call to help those in need. Hunger and homelessness do not take a holiday—they persist through the winter months. **If you are able, please consider a donation this Christmas season.** Your generosity helps us provide not only food and shelter, but



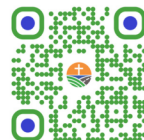
also love and community to those who often feel invisible—addressing what St. Teresa of Calcutta called “spiritual poverty”: “A person who is shut out, who feels unwanted, unloved, terrified... that spiritual poverty is much harder to overcome.”

Thank you for being part of our Catholic Social Services family. Your support makes a world of difference to the lives we touch.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Katie Patrick  
Executive Director

**PS: You may send your gift in the enclosed envelope.** Please fill out the information below (including any updates), detach the form and return it with your donation. You can also donate online at [csshope.org/seasonofhope](http://csshope.org/seasonofhope) or scan the QR code at the right. May God bless you and your family for helping us bring Hope in the Good Life!



**PPS: The enclosed holy card is our Season of Hope gift to you.** It features a prayer to St. Teresa of Calcutta, the saint our staff chose to be the CSS Patron Saint for the year! **St. Teresa of Calcutta, pray for us!!!**

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## Yes! I'll help nurture HOPE IN THE GOOD LIFE!

Support enclosed: \$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 \$10 other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make your check payable to Catholic Social Services. Donate by credit card at [csshope.org/seasonofhope](http://csshope.org/seasonofhope). All contributions to CSS are tax deductible as allowed by law.

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**May we pray for you? List your intentions below and we will remember them at CSS:**

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Check to receive an annual statement ONLY (individual thank you letters for each gift will NOT be sent to you.)