

Common Terms used in conjunction with Saints of the Catholic Church

ABBESS - The female superior of a community of twelve or more nuns. With a few necessary exceptions, the position of an Abbess in her convent corresponds generally with that of an Abbot in his monastery.

ABBOT - A title given to the superior of a community of twelve or more monks. The name is derived from *abba*, the Syriac form of the Hebrew word *ab*, and means "father."

APOLOGIST – someone who devotes his or her life to arguing persuasively certain important points of the Faith, as well as teaching the Faith.

APOSTLE – one of the original 12 Apostles called by Jesus and assisting Him in His earthly ministry and also St. Paul of Tarsus.

DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH - Certain ecclesiastical writers have received this title on account of the great advantage the whole Church has derived from their writings and teachings.

FOUNDER/FOUNDRRESS – indicates that the person has founded one or more religious communities/religious orders for either men or women setting forth a way of communal life that allowed for prayer and apostolic work to benefit the Church.

FATHER OF THE CHURCH – a term used to designate an early Bishop or teacher of the Faith until about the year 500 AD. Many Church Fathers wrote extensively on the Faith, and are valued because of the testimony they give the Faith and the practice of the Faith in the early centuries of the Church. Almost all of the Church Fathers were early Bishops.

HERMIT – an individual who chooses to live away from society and alone to devote himself to contemplation of God. The First hermits developed in the 3rd Century, and influenced later monastic life. It is based on Elijah from the Old Testament and St. John the Baptist in the New Testament.

MARTYR – someone who willing dies or is killed because of hatred of the Faith or God.

MISSIONARY – usually designates a Priest, Brother, or Sister who volunteers or is sent to an un-Christian area to bring the Gospel message of Jesus to those people in the hope that they will convert to Christianity.

MYSTIC – a person who experiences a deep relationship with God or vision of God that manifests itself in spiritual contributions and spiritual contributions to the spirituality of the Church.

RELIGIOUS – a male or female person who is a member of a religious order as a Monk, Brother, or Sister as a way of following a rule of communal life for perfection according to the Gospel.

VIRGIN – a term used by the Church to designate a woman who lived a pure life, unmarried for the love of Christ.

VISIONARY – a person who experiences visions of Jesus Christ, Mary, or one or more of the Saints.