

# ***The Role of Saints in the Church***



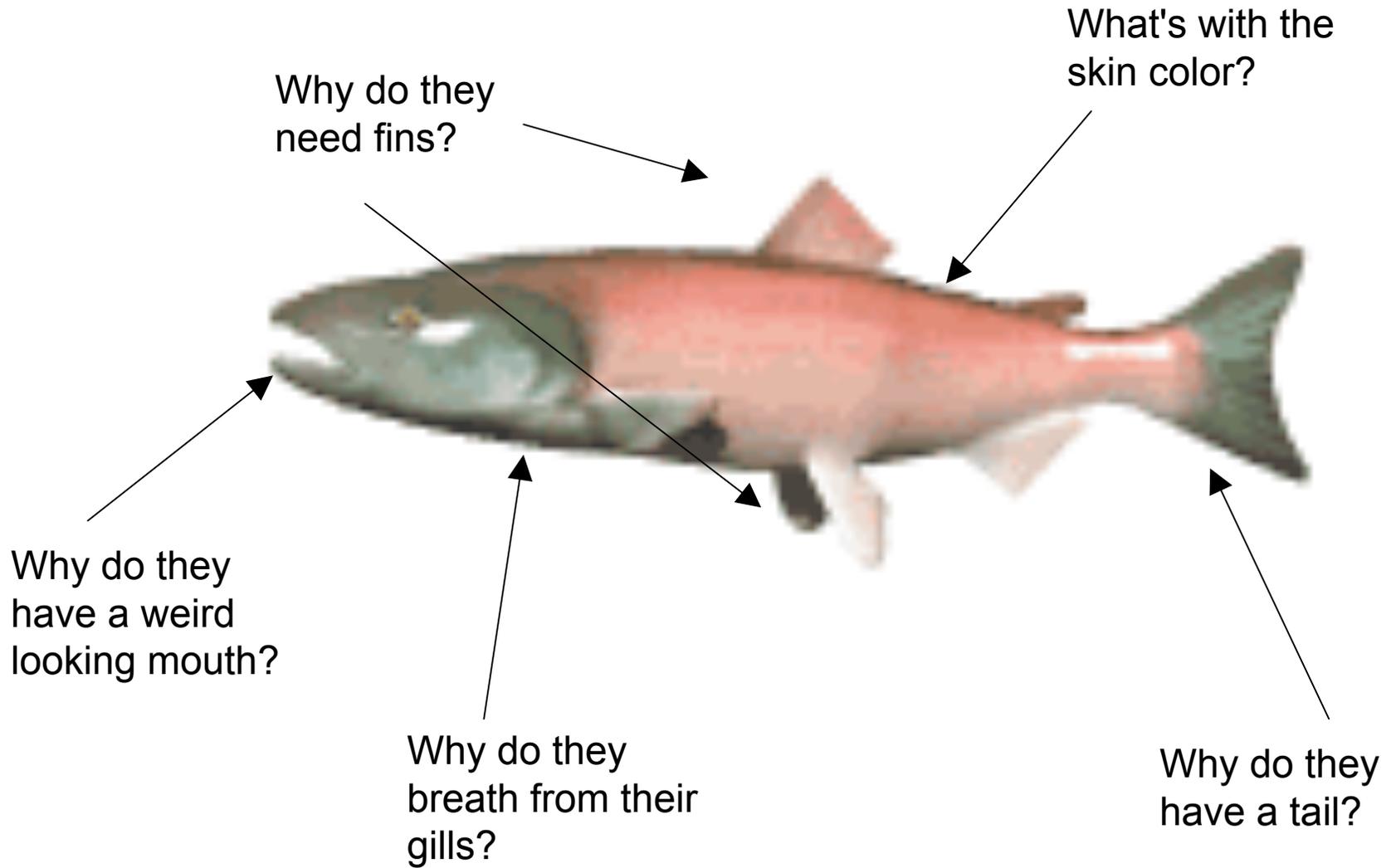
Fishes are always happy in water!



**I can't  
breath!!!**



# What is this???



## Understanding Scripture in the Context of the Church

*“The Church is the pillar and bulwark of Truth”*- 1 Timothy 3:15



# Rationalism, Logic & Reason

- ▶ These are enemies to the Faith!
- ▶ The western world wants to “***understand***” things before “***experiencing***” it
- ▶ Is God supposed to be understood through our finite mind or experienced?
- ▶ “***They are darkened in their understanding alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart***”

- Ephesians 4:18

# The **AVI** system of Understanding the Role of the Saints

- **A**cknowledgement
- **V**eneration
- **I**ntercession

# ***Acknowledgement***

- Who are saints?
- Why are they special?
- What does Scripture say about saints?
- Why do we need to acknowledge them?

# Our Qurbana, the Living Experience!

- “Our Lord Jesus, *Mary, who bought Thee forth, and John who baptized Thee, shall be suppliants unto Thee on our behalf.* Have mercy on us”
- ***“BY THY MOTHER’S EARNEST PRAYERS  
BY THY SAINT’S ENTREATIES***  
I adore Thee, Lord and King!  
Sole Begotten, Heavenly One...”

# We are surrounded!

- *“Therefore, since we are **surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses**, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us”- Hebrews 12:1*
- The cloud, represents the presence of God.
- The saints are in that cloud, as they are witnesses.
- The term ‘witnesses’. Not only are their lives an example, but they themselves are witnesses of the Christians lives on earth.

# Who are Saints???

- The only true Holy one (*Hagios gr.*) is God Himself- Leviticus 11:44, 19:2
- Those who are sanctified and glorified in Christ
- “To the Church of God that is in Corinth to those ***who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints***”- 1 Corinthians 1:2
- Those who receive the promise of God
- Saints do not receive holiness from their own merit but through ascetical struggle

# Who are Saints???

- **“And the glory that which you have given me, I have given them** that they may be one, even as we are one” - John 17:22
- The saints are **ALIVE in Christ** -they are in eternal communion with God
- In the Church there is no division between the living and the departed, but all are one in the love of God

# The saints generally fall into six categories

- **The Apostles**, who were the first ones to spread the message of the Incarnation of the Word of God and of salvation through Christ.
- **The Prophets**, because they predicted and prophesied the coming of the Messiah.
- **The Martyrs**, for sacrificing their lives and fearlessly confessing Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of mankind.
- **The Fathers and Hierarchs of the Church**, who excelled in explaining and in defending, by word and deed, the Christian faith.
- **The Monastics**, who lived in the desert and dedicated themselves to spiritual exercise (*askesis*), reaching, as far as possible, perfection in Christ.
- **The Just**, those who lived in the world, leading exemplary lives as clergy or laity with their families, becoming examples for imitation in society.

# With God are His Saints and angels

- ▶ *"The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, **With him were myriads of the holy ones at his right a host of his own**; Indeed O favorite among the **peoples all his holy ones** were in your charge; they marches at your heels, accepted direction from you."*

**-Deuteronomy 33:1-3**

- ▶ *"And the heavens will praise Your wonders, O LORD; **Your faithfulness also in the assembly of the saints.**"*

**-Psalms 89:5**

# The taste of the Second coming

- ***“Thus the LORD my God will come, And all the saints with You.”***

**-Zechariah 14:5**

- “Now Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about these men also, saying, ***“Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His saints”***

**-Jude 14**

- Christ was seen with Moses and Elijah on Mt. Tabor when He transfigured

# St. Paul calls out the Saints who are living

- ***“To the saints who live in Ephesus”***  
-Ephesians 1:1
- “To the Church of God that is in Corinth  
***including all the saints*** throughout Achaia”  
-2 Corinthians 1:2
- ***“As you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many”*** -2 Corinthians 1:11

# Authority is given to the Saints to judge

- *"Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? **Do you not know that the saints will judge the world?** And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?"*  
-1 Corinthians 6:2
- *"Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, **you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**"*  
Matthew 19:28

Those in heaven are aware of what is happening in the 'great city'

- "And they threw dust on their heads, as they wept and mourned, crying out, "Alas, alas, for the great city where all who had ships at sea grew rich by her wealth! In one hour she has been laid waste.

***Rejoice over her, O heaven, O saints and apostles and prophets, for God has given judgment for you against her!"***

-Rev. 18:20

# *Veneration*

- What does veneration mean?
- Why do we honor saints?
- Do we worship the saints?
- What's the difference between honoring and worshipping?
- Does God really care if the saints are venerated or not?

# Faith delivered to the Saints

- Faith is entrusted to the saints!-
- “I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the ***faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.***” – Jude 3
- “Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider ***the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith***” –Hebrews 13:7-8

We **DO NOT** *worship* them,  
we *venerate* them

- We **DO NOT** give saints the honor or worship that is due to God
- Worship and Adoration (*Latria* gr.) is given solely to God
- Veneration, honor and reverence (*Proskynesis* gr.) is given to angels and His saints

## St. Paul and Barnabas seen as Gods

- ***'The gods have come down to us in human form!' Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes,*** because he was the chief speaker. The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought oxen and garlands to the gates; ***he and the crowds wanted to offer sacrifice.*** When the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of it, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting, 'Friends, why are you doing this? ***We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them.***

***-Acts 14:3-15***

Does God want His saints to be honored?

● ***“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous”***

***- Matthew 10:40-41***

# St. Paul's command to honor the saints

- *“Respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due”*

**- Romans 13:7**

- “I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the Church at Cenchreae, so that you may **welcome her in the Lord as is fitting for the saints**”

**- Romans 16:1-2**

- “Welcome him (Epaphroditus) then in the Lord **with all joy and honor such people**”

**-Philippians 2:29**

- “I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and **your love toward all the saints**”

**– Ephesians 1:15**

# Where angels/saints were venerated

- ▶ ***Daniel 2:46-*** King Nebuchadnezzar fell upon his face in front of Daniel
- ▶ ***Numbers 22:31-*** The angel Accepted the veneration of Balaam
- ▶ ***Genesis 19:1-*** The angel of the Lord accepted the veneration of Lot
- ▶ ***Judges 13:18-21*** -Manoah asks for angels name to honor
- ▶ ***Daniel 10:9-15*** –The angel accepted the veneration of Daniel

# *Intercession*

- Does God accept intercession from saints?
- Why do we even bother interceding to saints?
- Can we see intercessions being done in Scripture?
- How can saints intercede if they are dead?

# Who and what are they praying for?

- Abraham's intercession for Sodom (*Genesis 18*)
- Moses interceding for Israel (*Exodus 15:25*)
- Melchizedek's meeting with Abraham (*Genesis 14:18-20*)
- We do not pray to Saints instead of praying to God
- We pray to the saints along with praying to God because the saints are in the presence of God

# The Prophets interceding for their people

- People of Israel asks Jeremiah to pray for them- They know Jeremiah is a man favored by God
- “***Pray for us to the Lord our God*** wherever the Lord our God says, tell us and we will do it” -Jeremiah 42:20



# Job the Righteous

- Job prayed for his friends
- “Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; ***and my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly;*** for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has done.” -Job 42:8

# Prayers of the saints rising

- “And when he had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each holding a harp, **and with golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints**”  
-Revelations 5:8-10
- “And another angel came and stood at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given **much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints** upon the golden altar before the throne; **and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints** from the hand of the angel before God.”  
-Revelations 8:3-4

There is nothing wrong for the fellow believers to pray for us

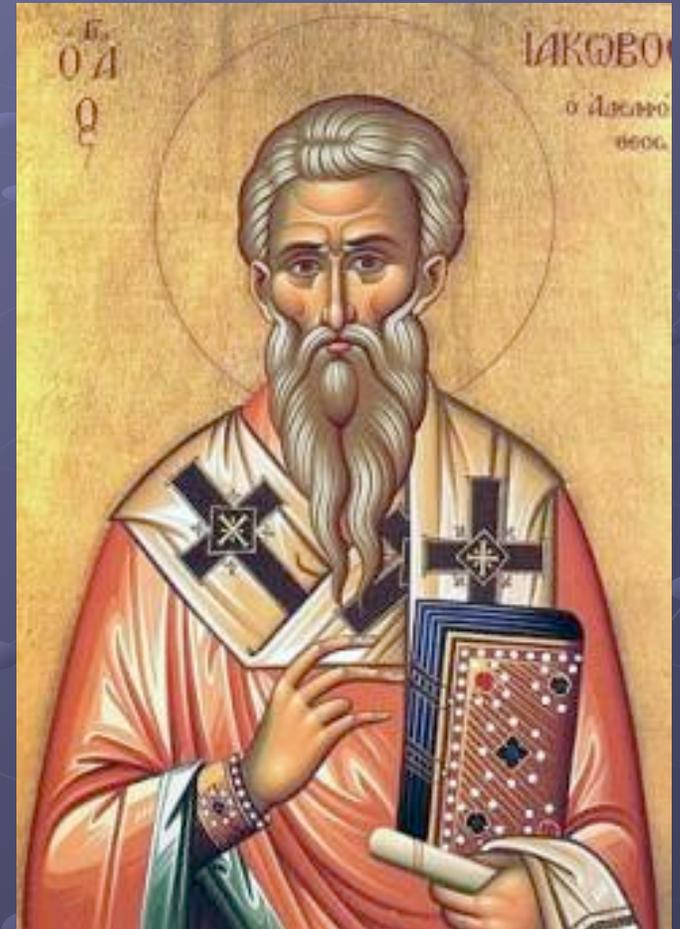
- We ask others to pray for us- thirumenis Achens, parents, friends
- “Are any among you sick? **They Should call for the elders of the church** and have them pray over them anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.” -James 5:14
- “The **prayer of the righteous** is powerful and effective” -James 5:16

# Moses and Samuel interceding

- In the Old Testament we see in Jeremiah a reference to people in God's presence interceding for those on earth
- *"Then the LORD said to me, **Though Moses and Samuel stood before me**, yet my heart would not turn toward this people. Send them out of my sight, and let them go!"*  
-Jeremiah 15:1-3

## St. James interceding to St. Joseph and the Holy apostles in his Proto-evangelion

- In the name of God, of one essence and three persons. The History of the death of our father, ***the holy old man, Joseph the carpenter. May his blessings and prayers preserve us all, O brethren!*** Amen.
- And the holy apostles have preserved this conversation, and have left it written down in the library at Jerusalem. ***May their prayers preserve us!*** Amen



## Ignatius of Antioch (+107), The Martyrdom of Ignatius, Chapter VII.—Ignatius Appears in a Vision After His Death

- ▶ Having ourselves been eye-witnesses of these things, and having spent the whole night in tears within the house, and having entreated the Lord, with bended knees and much prayer, that He would give us weak men full assurance respecting the things which were done, it came to pass, on our filling into a brief slumber, **that some of us saw the blessed Ignatius suddenly standing by us and embracing us, while others beheld him again praying for us**, and others still saw him dropping with sweat, as if he had just come from his great labor, and standing by the Lord.



Blessed Jerome (+420 Cent) writes concerning Blaesilla, a recent convert

- ***Blaesilla died within three months of her conversion, and Jerome now writes to Paula to offer her his sympathy and, if possible, to moderate her grief.*** He asks her to remember that Blaesilla is now in paradise, and so far to control herself as to prevent enemies of the faith from caviling at her conduct. Then he concludes with the prophecy (since more than fulfilled) that in his writings Blaesilla's name shall never die. Written at Rome in 389 a.d.
- ***For me, too, I feel sure, she makes intercession and asks God to pardon my sins in return*** for the warnings and advice that I bestowed on her, when to secure her salvation I braved the ill will of her family.

## St. Augustine (+430 cent) on the Soul and its origin Book IV Chapter 13

- “We know not what we should pray for as we ought,” he immediately added, “But the Spirit Himself mak-eth intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. ***And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God “ —that is to say, He makes the saints offer intercessions.*** He, of course, is that Spirit “whom God hath sent into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father;” and “by whom we cry, Abba, Father;”

Bishop Leo of Rome (5<sup>th</sup> Cent). Sermon LXXXV- On the feast of St. Laurence IV. Laurentius Has Conquered His Persecutor.

- “He has given us a support and an example, and has so spread abroad his glory throughout the world, that, from the rising of the sun to its going down, ***the brightness of his deacon’s light doth shine, and Rome is become as famous in Laurentius as Jerusalem was ennobled by Stephen. By his prayer and intercession we trust at all times to be assisted***”

# St. Mary – the Mother of God

- The Model of purity and humility
- She rectified the acts of Eve
  - Obeyed God's commandment
  - Brought salvation into the world
  - Accepted the will of God whole heartedly
  - Became the temple for God- She bore God in her womb
  - She was indeed spoken of through the prophets



# Angel Gabriel Honors the Mother of God

- *"The virgin's name was Mary. **And he came to her and said, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.'** But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, **'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.'**"*

- Luke 1:26-30



# The Holy Virgin Mary

- ***“Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And why has this happened to me, that the mother of my Lord comes to me?”***

-Luke 1:42-43

- ***“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. ***Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed***”***

- Luke 1:47-48



# The Liturgy of the Blessed Apostles Mar Adai (Thaddeus) and Mar Mari

- The Priest says the following prayer in secret: — ***O mother of our Lord Jesus Christ,*** beseech for me the only-begotten Son, who was born of thee, to forgive me my offences and my sins, and to accept from my feeble and sinful hands this sacrifice ***which my weakness offers upon this altar, through thy intercession for me, O holy mother.***

# Commonly misunderstood verses

- We need to know which verses in Scripture are misinterpreted by others
- Misunderstanding verses leads us away from the truth
- Misunderstanding verses comes from our rational way of thinking instead of relying on the experience of the saints

## Scriptural references that might seem against such practice

- “*For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus*, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all this was the attested at the right time”  
-1 Tim 2:5-6
- “First of all then, I urge that *supplications, prayers and intercessions and thanksgiving* be made for everyone.”  
-vs. 2:1
- “*This is right and is acceptable* in the sight of God”  
-vs. 3

“I do not call you servants...”

- Christ is able to intercede before the Father since only He presents Himself as a sacrifice for the salvation of the world
- No one except Christ is able to save man from sin
- When the saints pray for us, it is precisely our salvation that they seek from Christ
- The Saints intercede on our behalf for God to show mercy on our souls

# Salvation indeed only through Christ!

- *“There is salvation is no one else for there is no other name under heaven given among mortals by which we must be saved”*  
-Acts 4:12
- We are saved from sin only through Christ
- The saints aid us in prayer asking God to find mercy on our souls
- The saints have the ability to pray before God on behalf of man for their salvation

# No remembrance of God in Death?

- *“For in death there is no remembrance of you; in Sheol who will give you praise?” -Psalm 6:5*
- We cant praise God in our graves?
- Then how can dead people intercede for our prayers?
- What did David mean by this verse?

# How can saints pray if they are dead?

- "...and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die." - John 11:26
- Physical death does NOT mean to be spiritually non-active
- They continue to live after death, only in a different form than on earth.
- The Church (The body of Christ) prays for all its children who have died with true repentance

# Does God listen to the prayers of the Saints even if they are “*dead*” ?

- “*Then we make mention also of those who have already fallen asleep; first the patriarchs, prophets, Apostles, and martyrs, **that through their prayers and supplication God would receive our petitions***”-St. Cyril of Jerusalem in his Catechetical Lectures (350 AD)
- “By the command of your only-begotten Son we communicate with the memory of your saints . . . **by whose prayers and supplications have mercy upon us all**, and deliver us for the sake of your holy name” (Liturgy of St. Basil [A.D. 373]).

# What is it to us essentially?

- The Saints intensifies our relationship with Christ
- We through grace can attain sainthood
- We learn from their examples- imitating their lifestyle
- The Hope and joy that we get from the saints only amplifies and deepens our relationship with the Lord

*Glory be to Jesus Christ!*

