

the Vision

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE | DECEMBER 2024

Christmas, Saints, And Regular People

Famed Hollywood director Martin Scorsese has produced a docuseries for Fox Nation that explores the lives and sacrifices of several historical figures. The eight-segment series, titled "The Saints," will be presented in two parts that straddle the holy seasons of Christmas and Easter.

Scorsese profiles a handful of Christians that the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) considers to be "saints." He chose John the Baptist, Joan of Arc, Sebastian, Thomas Beckett and others. John the Baptist, of course, is the only biblical figure that Scorsese includes in the series.

So the series, which began November 17, raises an obvious question. What is a saint? And why does it matter that we answer that question?

Believe it or not, it matters a lot. And Christmas is the perfect time to remember the significance of what the Bible means when it refers to Christians as "saints."

Roman Catholics and "Saints"

Martin Scorsese was raised in the Roman Catholic Church. He has stated that he "grew up practically living in St. Patrick's Old Cathedral" in New York. As a child, he

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Church Events

- Dec 1st 11a—
BBA Toy Store Love Offering & Parent/Child Dedication— Sign Up at thefbcs.com/parent
- Dec 1st @ 6p—
Hanging of the Greens
- Dec 6th & 7th 8:30a-1230p—**Church Work Days**
- Dec 8th 11a—
"God Speaking"
Presented by
Celebration Choir
- Dec 9th 6:30-8:30p—
Ladies' Ministry Meeting Dinner Provided
- Dec 13th @ 6p—**Angel Tree & Youth Christmas Party**
- Dec 13th @ 6p—**Angel Tree & Youth Christmas Party**
- Dec 14th @ 8am—**Cars & Coffee**
- Dec 15th @ 11a—
"Symbols of Christmas" Presented by FBCS Kids Choir
- Dec 15th @ 6p—
Christmas In Song
- Dec 16th @ 4p-until—
Men's Ministry Oyster & Hotdog Roast
- Dec 24th-25th—
Office Closed
- Dec 24th @ 5:30p—
Candlelight, Communion & Carols Christmas Eve Service

Christmas, Saints, And Regular People Continued

says, he was fascinated by the statues of the saints and martyrs which filled the echoing cathedral. Who were these people, and what were their lives like?

In Roman Catholic theology, five years after a Christian dies and goes to heaven, he or she can be considered for sainthood.

Canonization is a process that, Catholics teach, recognizes a person's "sainthood." God alone bestows sainthood, but the Church can recognize God's action and then install that person into the canon of saints.

To repeat, these "saints" must be in heaven. That's so that they can intercede for the Christians on earth. That's part of the duty of sainthood. (Protestants often think that Catholics pray to the saints. More accurately, they pray *through* the saints. Saints in heaven serve as intermediaries between Christians on earth and God).

Along with being in heaven, the RCC applies rigorous criteria to determine sainthood, ending in one simple conclusion. "Saints" are Christians who have been granted special favor from God, lived lives that demonstrated that special favor, and they can now exercise that favor by mediating for Christians in the RCC.

Canonized "saints" share the chief attribute of martyrdom. Each of the people that Scorsese profiles died as martyrs in the service of the Christian faith. Guiltless but accused of crimes they did not commit, they sacrificed their lives for God. The circumstances may have been quite different, but the single thread tying them together is their self-sacrifice.

The admiration of the Martyrs

Everyone, religious or not, associates saints with people of extraordinary virtue. There is no problem with that. In fact, we admire heroes who sacrifice themselves for God and others because that self-sacrifice reminds us of the greatest sacrifice of all, Christ's death on the cross.

But there is a problem with attributing a kind of super-spirituality to a Christian martyr. Admiration for a person's sacrifice or their extraordinary life fosters similar virtues in us. But veneration or adoration crosses the line into worship.

And exalting certain people to the level of adoration or mediation raises two other problems. First, it's a hierarchal view of Christians and implies that only certain, super-spiritual people can be used of God in great ways. And second, only those super-Christians will sacrifice themselves for Christ.

But God calls all Christians to the same sainthood—to serve and sacrifice our lives for Christ, to be part of the great work of God.

God is an equal-opportunity Savior. Every Christian is saved the same way, enjoys the same salvation in Christ, and is called to give up his life to serve the cause of Christ.

What Does the Bible Say?

In the Bible, the word "saint" is never applied to super-Christians. Instead, it is applied to all Christians all the time. It echoes the expectation that Christians would live for Christ, and that every Christian is set apart for His service.

The biblical word "saint" comes from a Greek word that means "consecrated to God, holy, sacred, pious." In the New Testament, it's used in the plural ("saints") 67 times,



and only once in the singular (Phil. 4:21). So it normally references the collective community of faith (Acts 9:32, 19:13, 26:10; Eph. 4:12). Just regular people who serve an extraordinary Savior.

And three times the word refers to the character of Christians (Rom. 16:2, Eph. 4:12, 5:3). Followers of Christ are expected to show their relationship with Christ through their behavior as saints of God.

So, biblically, a key distinctive in the Bible is that "saints" are Christians who make up the body of Christ on earth. The process is not canonization. It's sanctification, being made holy by the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life.

Why does this matter at Christmas?

Christ did not come into the world as a Super-Human being. He came as one of us. He died on the cross as a man, flesh and blood, so that we could live with Him. Christ didn't come to make super-saints, but to save people who are dead in their trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1).

The Bible teaches that Christ alone is our Mediator with the Father, and that all Christians stand on equal ground in our salvation and our relationship with God (1 Tim. 2:5). Regular Christians can confidently approach the Father in the name of Christ and can know that their prayers are heard and answered. Not because of super-saints mediating the conversation, but because of Jesus Christ.

See, Jesus came at Christmas for all of us. He did not come to make super-spiritual people who God favors above all others. No, He came for everyone one of us, from the worst sinner to the classless reprobate to the religious poser and the prideful imposter.

And He calls us all to be sanctified followers of Christ.

The problem with venerating saints is not only the inherent proximity to idolatry, but it's also the implication that you and I can't be just as holy, just as admired, or just as capable of living for Christ as any other Christian through the ages.

You don't have to be a super-saint to please God. You just need to surrender to and faithfully follow the One True Savior who came at Christmas to die for your sins.

Merry Christmas!

With Love in Christ,

Pastor Bob



DEACON OF THE WEEK

FORREST TAYLOR

(910) 443-1054

fshinbuilder@yahoo.com

Dec 1st-7th



ROB MICHEL

(910) 233-6498

robmichel0514@gmail.com

Dec 18th-14th



DOUG WARD

(910) 512-1739

dward@atmc.net

Dec 15th-21st



JAMES BUFFKIN

(910) 279-5179

buffkins@atmc.net

Dec 22nd-28th



VERNON ABNEY

(910) 834-4098

abney358655@gmail.com

Dec 29th-Jan 4th



Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

James 5:15 ESV

Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

The Great Pursuit-To Reach Every Nation— No Matter the Cost

WHAT IS THE GREAT PURSUIT?

The Great Pursuit is our unwavering effort to reach the nations with the gospel, from the Great Commission in Matthew 28, until the Great Multitude in Revelation 7.

God invites us to join Him in the Great Pursuit.

In a world filled with diverse cultures, languages, and people, we are unified in this mission—His mission.

UNITED IN THE GREAT PURSUIT

We must work together to reach the nations. God didn't give His commands to a select few. He gave His commands to the Church—to all believers. This is our commitment. This is our mission. Everything we do in obedience to the Great Commission is our Great Pursuit.

Join the Great Pursuit and make Jesus known among the nations. Your gift supports missionary presence and gospel transformation around the world.



OUR GOAL: \$9,000

100% of your gift to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering* supports and sustains missionary presence.

THE GREAT PURSUIT

INTERNATIONAL MISSION BOARD

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The Need for Male Role Models

According to NC Census data, 52.6% of children in North Carolina are currently growing up in a single parent home. More specifically, 28.8% of NC family households have only a female parent, with no additional spouse present. During First Baptist Shallotte's annual Worldview Conference this year, Alex McFarland listed several key factors that contribute to mental health issues in young children and teens. Alex McFarland stated that the number one contributor to mental health issues such as homosexuality and transgenderism, as well as depression and anxiety, is the lack of bonding with the parent of the same gender. Who would have thought that girls need their moms, and boys need their dad to model healthy and biblical behavior respectively? God did when he designed marriage to be between a man and a woman, each with their distinct roles, for life (Matt 19:4-6, cf. Gen 2:24). Both mom and dad are essential role models in a young child's life.

But let's zoom in on men and sons. North Carolina is not alone in this epidemic that is the lack of father figures and male lead-

ership in the home. Boys across the nation are growing up in fatherless homes, or at times, homes with a negative male influence. While the reasons behind an alarming divorce rate and a saddeningly high rate of men abandoning their families are many and complex, it all boils down to sin and brokenness. This sin and brokenness often becomes cyclical, as is the tendency with most sin (Judg 2:16-19). Broken families create broken children, who carry baggage others do not see or understand. These boys grow to be men, and these men carry this baggage into their families. And when things get tough, they often default to what was modeled to them. It is a grim and downward spiral – an ever-growing one.

TrailLife USA

America needs biblical male leadership. North Carolina needs biblical male leader-

ship. Brunswick County needs biblical male leadership. Enter TrailLife USA, specifically Troop NC-0117. What is TrailLife? In case you missed Pastor Bob's article on TrailLife, here's what they are straight from their website:

Trail Life USA is a Church-Based, Christ-Centered, Boy-Focused mentoring and discipleship journey that speaks to the heart of a boy. Established on timeless values derived from the Bible and set in the context of outdoor adventure, boys from age 5 to 17 are engaged in a Troop setting by male mentors where they are challenged to grow in character, understand their purpose, serve their community, and develop practical leadership skills to carry out the mission for which they were created. (TrailLifeUSA.com)



"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45 NIV

Christmas

I think our troop, Troop NC-0117, epitomizes what TrailLife stands for and seeks to accomplish. Our leadership team gets it, and I am pleased to share the exponential growth we have seen in the last year. We have gone from a handful of boys at charter, to just over 60 boys currently. We have averaged one additional boy each week that we have met. God is good! Our troop is growing fast, and as our troop grows, so do its opportunities to serve the community, and so does its need for godly men to step up and pour into our swiftly growing troop. Enter The Forge movie night, January 5th.

The Forge

The Forge is a Kendrick Brothers film that our very own Troop NC-0117 is hosting January 5th at 6pm. The Forge is all about

godly men speaking truth into a young man named Isaiah Wright, who loves basketball and video games – but is at odds with his single mom Cynthia, who gives him an ultimatum to get a job or move out. The Forge focuses on the very issue Trail Life seeks to address: the vacuum of biblical male leadership in the home, and the need for godly men to step up to the plate.

I want to encourage you and your whole family to attend and watch this challenging and encouraging film. There will be troop NC-0117 trailmen serving pizza, popcorn and drinks, as well as younger trailmen seating families. This will be a great opportunity to meet our Trail Life troop as a whole, the leadership team, and provide some opportunities to support them. Join me and my family for this wonderful family movie night and support our TrailLife troop!

Conclusion

Pray for our nation's next generation. Pray for the many boys growing up in fatherless homes. Pray for TrailLife USA and the other ministries combating the lack of biblical male leadership in the home. Pray for our troop, and the many men from our church and other local churches that sacrifice time with their families to pour into the boys of our community. Support our troop by showing up January 5th at 6pm for TrailLife movie night here at FBCS! Support our troop by giving to the TrailLife Fund. Support our troop by giving your time through service. Find out more about getting involved with TrailLife at the upcoming movie night, or by contacting me (pastorkevin@firstbaptistshallotte.com) or Drew Sellers, Troop Committee Chairman (ndsellers@gmail.com).

In Christ,
Pastor Kevin

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FREE FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

January 5th at 6pm

Pizza, Popcorn and Drinks; Sponsored by Trail Life Troop NC-0117

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF SHALLOTTE

LOVE GOD. LOVE ONE ANOTHER. LOVE THE WORLD.

4486 Main Street
Shallotte, NC 28470

910.754.4048
fbcshallotte.org

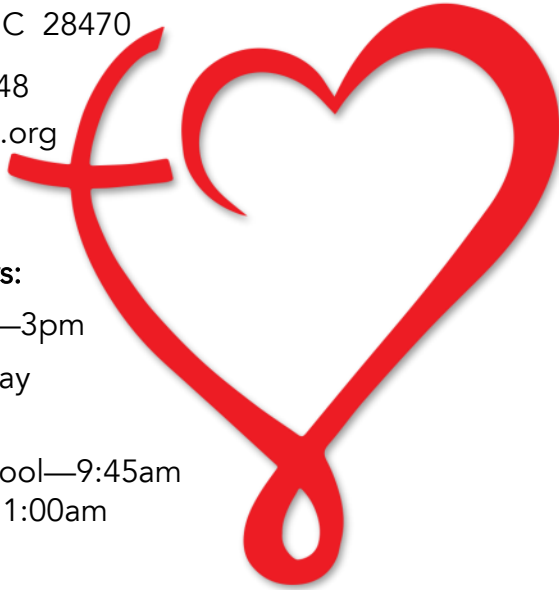
Office Hours:

M-Th 9am—3pm

Closed Friday

Sunday School—9:45am

Worship—11:00am



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Shallotte, NC

Bible Reading Plan

With Daily Proverbs

12/1/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Gal 1-3; Pro 16	12/16/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 8-10; Pro 31
12/2/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Gal 4-6; Pro 17	12/17/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 11-13; Pro 1
12/3/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Eph 1-4; Pro 18	12/18/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Jam 1-3; Pro 2
12/4/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Eph 5-6; Phil 1; Pro 19	12/19/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Jam 4-5; 1 Pe 1-2; Pro 3
12/5/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Phil 2-4; Pro 20	12/20/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Pe 3-5; Pro 4
12/6/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Col 1-3; Pro 21	12/21/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Pe 1-3; Pro 5
12/7/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Col 4; 1 Th 1-3; Pro 22	12/22/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Jn 1-3; Pro 6
12/8/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Th 4-5; 2 Th 1; Pro 23	12/23/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Jn 4-5; 2 Jn; 3 Jn; Pro 7
12/9/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Th 2-3; 1 Ti 1; Pro 24	12/24/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Jude; Rev 1-2; Pro 8
12/10/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Ti 2-4; Pro 25	12/25/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 3-5; Pro 9
12/11/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Ti 5-6; 2 Ti 1-2; Pro 26	12/26/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 6-8; Pro 10
12/12/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Ti 3-4; Tit 1; Pro 27	12/27/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 9-12; Pro 11
12/13/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Tit 2-3; Phlm; Pro 28	12/28/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 13-15; Pro 12
12/14/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 1-3; Pro 29	12/29/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 16-18; Pro 13
12/15/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Heb 4-7; Pro 30	12/30/2024	<input type="checkbox"/> Rev 19-22; Pro 14