

Saint making, printed from www.mrschisholm.com

A reader-friendly explanation of saint-making is on the www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint website. However, a web-search will turn up similar accounts. All of these refer to the advancement of the Cause requiring authenticated miracles obtained through intercessory prayer to the person who is the subject of the Cause and conclusive evidence of a life of heroic virtue.

Clara Geoghegan has written two papers that deal with issues about saint-making in the Catholic Church as they specifically relate to Caroline Chisholm. Clara has agreed to the two papers being made available on www.mrschisholm.com.

Caroline Chisholm: Prophet of the Laity – this paper identifies key areas of Caroline Chisholm’s life and work, including her motivation and vocational call. It explores and advances preliminary evaluation of these key areas, and concludes that further study would enable them to be developed further and perhaps allow a clearer vision of her heroic virtue. <<Prophet of the Laity>>

Caroline Chisholm and the Polemics of Sainthood – this paper gives a brief overview of saint-making in the early Church, the tighter requirements that later emerged and what needs nowadays to be shown regarding “renown for sanctity” and its basis etc. it then provides a detailed review of Caroline Chisholm’s life and how she has been viewed, the significant interest at different times in having a Cause commenced, others’ critiques as to why no Cause had been commenced, and her fulfilment of the call-to-holiness criteria set for the laity by Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifidelis Laici* [Latin for “the lay members of Christ’s faithful people”] in 1989. <<Polemics of Sainthood>>

Clara’s Polemics of Sanctity paper cites some of Cardinal Ratzinger’s [now Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI] reflections about the criteria the Catholic Church might adopt when prioritizing and considering current and future canonization proposals. His reflections in a 30 Days interview in the 1980s are germane to the feasibility of having a Cause launched for Caroline Chisholm. They include the following:

- (1) The Church can never have “too many” saints; and the number of the faithful the Church has declared to be saints is necessarily and always fewer than the number of the faithful who lived saintly lives.
- (2) The long-standing criteria by which the Church prioritizes and considers who goes forward in the canonization process [also called the Cause] “already indicates a choice among a very large number. The choice is linked to some chance events: for example, a religious order will be able to gather together testimony about an individual’s sanctity, and follow the canonization procedure more easily, than those who are ignorant of the process, or friends of a father or mother of a family” [reported in Marina Ricci’s “I never said there are too many”, 30 Days, May, 1989].
- (3) Cardinal Ratzinger said that Pope John Paul II had encouraged “going beyond this ‘classic priority’ and turning instead to lay saints who could be canonized as much as possible”. Cardinal Ratzinger added that “those who have a message to transmit to the entire Church”, rather than “play an exemplary role for only a restricted circle of individuals”, are the ones who should particularly proceed to canonization [see previous source].