



RELIQ SAINTS

"We do not worship, we do not adore, for fear that we should bow down to the creature rather than to the creator, but we venerate the relics of the martyrs in order the better to adore him whose martyrs they are." – St. Jerome

About Relics

Relics are physical objects that have a direct association with the saints or with Our Lord. They are usually broken down into three classes.

1

First class relics are the body or fragments of the body of a saint, such as pieces of bone or flesh.

2

Second class relics are something that a saint personally owned, such as a shirt or book (or fragments of those items).

3

Third class relics are those items that a saint touched or that have been touched to a first, second, or another third class relic of a saint.

Relics in Scripture

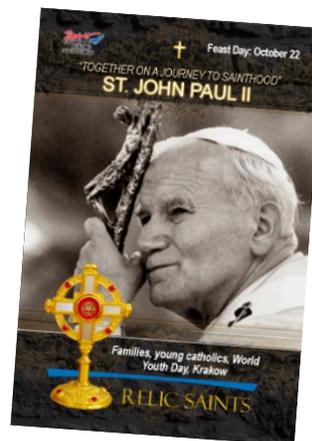
Scripture teaches that God acts through relics, especially in terms of healing. In fact, when surveying what Scripture has to say about sacred relics, one is left with the idea that healing is what relics "do."

- When the corpse of a man was touched to the bones of the prophet Elisha the man came back to life and rose to his feet (2 Kings 13:20-21).
- A woman was healed of her hemorrhage simply by touching the hem of Jesus' cloak (Matthew 9:20-22).
- The signs and wonders worked by the Apostles were so great that people would line the streets with the sick so that when Peter walked by at least his shadow might 'touch' them (Acts 5:12-15).
- When handkerchiefs or aprons that had been touched to Paul were applied to the sick, the people were healed and evil spirits were driven out of them (Acts 19:11-12).

In each of these instances God has brought about a healing using a material object. The vehicle for the healing was the touching of that object. It is very important to note, however, that the cause of the healing is God; the relics are a means through which He acts. In other words, **relics are not magic**. They do not contain a power that is their own; a power separate from God. Any good that comes about through a relic is God's doing. But the fact that God chooses to use the relics of saints to work healing and miracles tells us that He wants to draw our attention to the saints as "models and intercessors" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 828).

Veneration

The veneration of relics is a communion with the heroes of our Christian faith, asking for their powerful intercession. Many people have reported outstanding blessings and conversions through this ministry, and many have reported healings. Attendees are encouraged to bring their articles of devotion (such as rosaries, holy cards, etc.) and pictures of ill friends/family members which may be touched to the reliquaries as a means of intercessory prayer.



Relics in Early Christianity

The veneration of relics is seen explicitly as early as the account of Polycarp's martyrdom written by the Smyrnaeans in A.D. 156. In it, the Christians describe the events following his burning at the stake: "We took up his bones, which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place, where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy and to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom."

For more information on relics, visit treasuresofthechurch.com