



Saint Rita of Cascia: *Patron Saint of Impossible Causes*

Steve Simeone



"St. Rita" by Kevin Dooley, CC BY 2.0

What a joy it is to be Catholic! How easily do we forget all the wonderful Graces we have been blessed to receive! As a cradle Catholic, I have been guilty at times of stumbling through life like a spiritual trust fund baby. Not always appreciating the beauty and treasures of our faith, passed down through the generations.

One of those treasures is the intercessory prayer of the Saints. As an Italian-American, it has always made sense to think, in a spiritual way, "I got a guy". Lost my car keys? Ask Saint Anthony. Need to sell a house? Turn to Saint Joseph. Somebody needs healing? Saint Padre Pio.

As I have journeyed through life, different Saints have joined me along the way. I chose Jude as my Confirmation name. I cannot tell you why. I just knew he was my guy. A few years later, my family needed a miracle and out of nowhere Saint Philomena showed up to rescue us. Saint Philip Neri has helped me infuse the Faith into stand-up comedy. I was told that Saints can introduce themselves when needed. I thought I knew what that meant until I met Saint Rita.

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Saint Rita of Cascia is famously known as the “Patron Saint of Impossible Causes”. She was a pious child who embraced suffering and imitated Christ more perfectly through each stage of her life. First as a wife and mother, then as a widow, and finally as an Augustinian nun. At the age of sixty, while meditating on the Passion of Christ, Saint Rita received a wound – a thorn from Christ’s own crown - on her forehead. To this day, her body is incorrupt, with the stigmata intact.

I was first introduced to Saint Rita in the spring of 2021. During the COVID lockdown my friend Tony and I started to pray a daily rosary together over the phone. As Saint Rita's feast day approached, he suggested we start a novena because, in his words, “She's a powerhouse!”. At the time, I had no idea how true those words were or how important that initial novena would be.

Three months later my parents were sharing a room together in the COVID unit of a local hospital. In addition to COVID, my mom had double pneumonia, it would take a miracle for her to survive.

My life was put on hold, the only thing I could do was pray and beg God for a miracle. I would have been lost if not for my Catholic faith. Yes, I prayed in a personal way. Open, honest, raw pleading. Tears streaming from my eyes serving as what my buddy Justin calls “liquid prayers”. However, it was the Sacraments, the mysteries of the Holy Rosary and prayers to the Saints that brought me peace. I can’t say it enough - what a joy it is to be Catholic!

Before I share my testimony, I want to quote Saint Augustine, Saint Rita's spiritual father, who said,

"Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward of this faith is to see what you believe." I like to paraphrase this and say, “Faith is believing in what you can't see and, if your faith is strong enough, you'll soon see things you can't believe.” I'm talking about miracles.

During those days of intense prayer one name was constantly on my mind, Rita. I didn’t immediately connect this to Saint Rita, or the novena I had prayed with Tony just a few months earlier. I assumed somebody named Rita needed my prayers and added her to my growing prayer list.

A few days later I found out, exactly why the name Rita was constantly on my mind. I read an article on how a statue of Saint Rita went missing from her National Shrine in Philadelphia. The \$100,000 statue locked in a glass case was assumed stolen even though neither the case nor padlock was damaged in any way.

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National Shrine of St. Rita of Cascia, Philadelphia
Photo by Carla Guerriero

Miraculously, a few days later the statue appeared unharmed in the middle of the sidewalk just a few blocks away.

As I read, I heard in my heart in the most loving way possible, "Hey Stunad', idiot, do I have your attention now? I can help you. I can help your parents! Make a novena to me. I can help; you just need to ask!"

At once, I prayed all nine days of the novena and then called the National Shrine of Saint Rita in Philadelphia. The angel who answered the phone arranged for Masses to be said, enrolled my family in the Society of Saint Rita, and even ran upstairs to light a candle for my parents. Then a stranger, Madeline has since become one of my closest and dearest friends. Another gift from Saint Rita.



The Miracle of the Rose in Winter
National Shrine of Saint Rita of Cascia, Philadelphia
Photo by Carla Guerriero

I hung up the phone still buzzing from my mystical experience with Saint Rita. I felt lighter, for the first time in days. I had hope. I felt like Saint Rita was already helping. Then, almost immediately, my phone rang. It was my Mom calling from the hospital. It was the first time I had heard her voice since she was admitted. She cried as I told her about Saint Rita.

A few days later my parents came home from the hospital. The road to recovery wasn't easy but it was filled with miracles. With all the craziness of the world, I think it's important to remember that God is still in the miracle business. God is real. God loves us. Prayer works.

The older I get, the more I like to think of the Saints as my "Heaven Buddies". They're not just role models, but friends. As my Mom used to say, "Show me your friends and I'll show you your future."

This May, introduce yourself to my "Heaven Buddy" Saint Rita. [Make a novena in honor of her May 22nd Feast Day](#). This way, if you ever need a miracle, you're not asking a stranger.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Steve Simeone is a Catholic, family-friendly, stand-up comedian. He spent 20 years in Hollywood performing at the World Famous Comedy Store alongside comedians like Dave Chapelle, Joe Rogan, and Bill Burr. Steve made his national television debut on Comedy Central's "Stand Up Revolution" hosted by Gabriel Iglesias and has returned to the network multiple times on the show "This is not Happening". His comedy albums "What's up Nerds?" and "Jabba" have reached number one on both the Apple and Google Play and his comedy is heard daily on SiriusXM radio. His first special "Ice Cream for Breakfast" was released by Dry Bar Comedy in 2022. He recently filmed the debut season of "The End" storytelling show with Nate Bargatze, Shane Gillis, and Tom Segura. He has toured with the USO and "Comics On Duty" entertaining our troops around the world. His podcast "Heaven Buddies" debuts in the Spring of 2026. Steve builds his comedy around the themes of family, food, and fun while echoing the message of Fulton J. Sheen that "life is worth living". Steve has worked with numerous charities including Regular Hero, the Motion Picture Television Fund, and the Christopher Reeve Foundation. He is a parishioner at Saint Anthony's Church in Lakeland, Florida, a volunteer with the Vincent DePaul Food Pantry, and a Knight of Columbus.

Prayer to Saint Rita of Cascia

The Saint of the Impossible

Feast Day: May 22nd

May 13th through May 21st: PRAY THE NOVENA TO ST. RITA! In [ENGLISH](#) or in [ITALIAN](#)



[Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, LC-DIG-pga-09871](#)

O glorious Saint Rita,
Who did miraculously
participate in the sorrowful
Passion of our Lord Jesus
Christ, obtain for me the
graces to suffer with love the
troubles of this life, and
protect me in all my needs.
Through Christ Our Lord.
Amen.

O gloriosa Santa Rita,
Tu che fosti prodigiosamente
partecipe della dolorosa
Passione di nostro Signore
Gesù Cristo, ottienimi di vivere
con amore le pene di questa
vita, e soccorrimi in tutte le
mie necessità.
Per Cristo nostro Signore.
Amen.

Born: **1381 - Roccaporena, Perugia**

Died: **May 22, 1457 - Cascia, Perugia**

Canonized: **May 24, 1900 by Pope Leo XIII**

Major Shrine: **Basilica di Santa Rita da Cascia - Cascia, Perugia**

Patron Saint of: **LOST AND IMPOSSIBLE CAUSES**, sickness, wounds, abuse victims, **MARRIED COUPLES**, marital problems, **WIDOWS, MOTHERS**, parenthood, and infertility.

From Butler's *Lives of the Saints*: Her parents opposed her desire to become a nun, and persuaded her to marry a man who, in a short time, lost his reputation on account of his cruelty. After being converted from his wicked ways, he was murdered by an enemy. Rita's two sons then resolved to take revenge, but through her prayers they repented. After their death, she applied several times for admission into the Augustinian Convent at Cascia. Repeatedly refused until God Himself cleared away all obstacles, she entered the convent, made her profession and lived the life of a holy and devout Religious for forty-two years, "a shining example of every Christian virtue, pure as a lily, simple as a dove, and obedient as an angel." That "God is wonderful in His Saints" is easily proved in the life of St. Rita, and, owing to her great number of miracles, she is often styled "The Saint of the Impossible."



SAINTS AND ROSES

Many saints,
including Saint Rita of Cascia,
are associated with roses.

Click below to read some of their
extraordinary and miraculous stories!

[St. Dorothy: Martyrdom and Roses](#)

[St. Elizabeth of Hungary: Bread and Roses](#)

[St. Faustina Kowalska: Potatoes and Roses](#)

[St. Juan Diego: Our Lady's Roses](#)

[St. Pio of Pietrelcina: The Gift of the Rose](#)

[St. Rita of Cascia: A Rose in Winter](#)

[St. Rosalia: A Rose Without Thorns](#)

[St. Rose of Lima: A Crown of Roses](#)

[St. Thérèse of Lisieux: A Shower of Roses](#)



Aeneas and the Italian-American Experience: Piety, the Past, and the Future

Rev. Cav. Willam Rock, FSSP

In Virgil's *Aeneid*, when the titular character, Aeneas, explains to Queen Dido of Carthage his escape from Troy as it was falling to the Greeks, he describes how he carried his father on his back, who, in turn, carried the household idols, and led his son by the hand (II:705ff). Symbolically, the father represented Troy's past and its culture; the son, the future; the idols, their reverence towards their gods; and Aeneas, the present struggle. Eventually, Aeneas would lead those who were following him to the Italian peninsula where they would lay the foundation of Rome, a foundation constituted from Trojan culture, history, and reverence for their gods, thus ensuring, as best they could, a future and life for their descendants in developed continuity with their own.



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In this episode of the epic, the story of the Italian immigrants of the late 1800s and early 1900s finds a harmony. These immigrants left a war-torn and devastated area, unjustly invaded and occupied by a hostile force. They carried with them to their new homes their traditions and cultures from their different regions and towns, which mingled and merged to form a broader, unique Italian-American culture – although, perhaps, cultures would be more accurate – and a unique subtype of American Catholicism. By their hard work and sacrifices, they laid the foundation for a better future for their descendants. Lastly, they brought with them, not false gods or idols of paganism, but the Catholic devotions of their towns, cities and regions, particularly the veneration of the local patron saint or saints. These veneration to the patron saint(s) and devotions of the old country would, in many places, develop into mutual aid societies under the patronage of the saint(s), feasts and processions with newly commissioned images or statues of the saint(s), festivals, and other expressions of religious piety and of Italian-American identity. All of these would serve as a point of unity for the newly developing communities while, at the same time, providing a tangible connection to the Mezzogiorno. And, if, God forbid, it had been forgotten or neglected, these served as a reminder to the descendants of the immigrants of where and from whom they descended and whose sacrifices and hardships laid the foundation for the current state of things.

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The Aeneas-dynamic also occurred and continues to occur on the personal level. At one point, many, if not all of us, were the young child being led, perhaps not understanding and not appreciating the leading. Perhaps now we are Aeneas, with the duty of leading and preparing the next generation while also carrying the burden of preserving history and overseeing that strange tension which is the preservation (or, perhaps, the recovery) and, at the same time, the evolution of tradition and culture all the while ensuring that the proper piety is shown the saint. Some of us, perhaps, are now the father who, although resigned to the fact the days as Aeneas have come to an end, are still revered for the sacrifices made and also for the knowledge possessed, who are even today inquired of, and who are seen as the last living link to those who came before.

As we are soon to enter into this new feast season, *ragazzi*, we should be on guard lest being distracted by all which needs to be done, by the excitement of the celebrations, by the deep stirring of emotions, and by the tastes and smells, we neglect what lies at the root – a proud and deep history, a vision which looks towards and prepares for the future by sacrifice and care, and piety and devotion to the local saint who is synonymous with town, village, city, or area of origin. Let us, then, resolve to make concrete efforts to ensure that what truly matters is not lost. Take the time to tell family and community stories, perhaps even recording them. Set up displays of history and memorabilia. Take time to remember those who came before. Orient the celebrations to ensure they can, in their essentials, be passed down to the next generations and begin to involve the members of these next generations as soon as it is possible. And, lastly, make sure the devotion to the saint is the center and soul of the celebration for these are what it properly and truly is. But, be warned, without that which is truly the soul, no matter how active things may be, the true life-spark will be absent. In fine, neglect not the son, the father, nor the saint for they emerged together and together they should remain.

[Photo by Anthony Scillia](#)



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Fuoco E Gioia

A Bite of Catechism

What is a state of grace?

The Catechism describes the state of grace as living in sanctifying grace—that is:

“Sanctifying grace is a habitual gift, a stable and supernatural disposition that perfects the soul itself to enable it to live with God and to act by his love.” — Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 2000)

Am I in a state of grace?

When Joan of Arc was asked this during her trial, it was meant to trap her. But guided by the Holy Spirit she responded:

“If I am not in a state of grace, may God put me there; and if I am, may God keep me there.”

We are not meant to presume—but to remain humble, examine ourselves, and return to God when needed.

What is sin? Mortal sin? Venial sin?

Sin is an offense against God—a failure in genuine love for Him and for others. It is a turning away from God’s will and choosing ourselves instead. Mortal sin breaks our friendship with God and destroys the life of grace in the soul. For a sin to be mortal, it must involve grave matter, full knowledge, and deliberate consent. Venial sin wounds our relationship with God but does not break it. Simply put: mortal sin kills the life of grace, while venial sin weakens it.

If you sin, can you fix it?

Yes. Go to confession. Confession is not just helpful—it is the ordinary and necessary way in which God restores the life of grace after mortal sin. It is a sacrament given to us by Jesus Christ so that we can be forgiven and brought back to life spiritually.

The power of confession (*private revelation*)

When Margaret Mary Alacoque was receiving revelations from Jesus Christ, she shared them with her confessor. Skeptical, the priest told her to ask Jesus what the last mortal sin was that he had confessed. She returned with her answer: that Jesus did not remember. This story shows that when sins are truly confessed and absolved, they are no longer held against the soul. This is the power of confession—to restore, to heal, and to truly begin again.



[St. Peter's Basilica, Rome, Italy — Altar of the Sacred Heart \(mosaic\), designed by Carlo Muccioli, 1919–1920.](#) / CC0 1.0 Universal

Per i Più Piccoli

An Excerpt from *Our Friend, St. Rose of Lima*

This book includes a foreword by [Ana Munley](#) of the [After Mass Podcast](#).



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One time, after St. Rose's death, a woman was having a very difficult time delivering her baby. The baby's position in her belly was not normal. Both mother and child were in danger.

The mother invoked St. Rose for help. Immediately, the baby was born easily, saving both the baby and the mother.

The boy's name was Peter de Guixano. The miracle saved his life—and he was born with a tell-tale birthmark, shaped like a red rose, on his right eyelid!

