



## What does it mean to be called to sainthood?

In his life, Deacon Bill Garrett, President of Cristo Rey Atlanta Jesuit High School, says he has two notable claims to fame – throwing out the first pitch at an Atlanta Braves’ game, and receiving his college diploma in 1976 from Mother Teresa.

“I had no idea who she was at the time,” Garrett said of Mother Teresa, “but we all soon learned more.”

The question Mother Teresa posed to Garrett and others at the graduation: “How do you feel about being a living saint?”



Mother Teresa then told the audience, “We’re all called to sainthood.”

So what does it mean to be called to sainthood?

Garrett shared that in 2010, then-Archbishop Timothy Dolan did an interview with *60 Minutes* about the five critical issues facing the Catholic Church.

He then asked everyone at the September 9<sup>th</sup> session of BELIEVES, “Would you take a moment with those at your table and identify what you think Archbishop Dolan shared, and what you think the five critical issues facing the church today are.”

Each table of business men and women began to discuss this and the responses varied.

Sharon Zukauckas, a BELIEVES attendee, shared at her table, “I think some of the critical issues would be identifying ourselves as Christians and living the faith, the child molestation by priests that has occurred, the lack of young people interested in vocations, and the perception of the Catholic church.”

Marie Corrigan, Founding Director and Head of School at Sophia Academy spoke for those at her table stating, “We thought the same ones in 2010 would be the same ones now – vocations, apathy, and the sanctity of life.”

Joe Yi, Financial Advisor for Raymond James, added, “We had an interesting one from our table – religious tolerance from around the world.”

Collectively, the perceived critical issues included those mentioned by Zukauckas, Corrigan, and Yi, plus a few others such as closing parishes, community relevancy, and the strengthening of the family unit.

So, what were the five critical issues that then-Archbishop Timothy Dolan stated in the *60 Minutes* interview in 2010?

Contraception, abortion, women priests, gay marriage, and married priests.

“When I heard the interview,” Garrett recalled, “I said to myself ‘if the five issues Archbishop Dolan said are what it is going to take to get to Heaven, I should have a clear shot.’”

Since becoming Pope, Garrett believes that Pope Francis has changed the focus from issues like those mentioned by Dolan to a focus on how we affect one another.

For Garrett, this focus by Pope Francis is captured in the words of Father Pedro Arupe, S.J., who in 1968 coined the phrase 'preferential option for the poor,' which basically mirrors the idea that Jesus spoke about when he said 'whatever you do to the least of my people, so you have done to me.'

"What is important for us all to consider is 'how do we make sure the things identified today are carried out to serve those in need?'" Garrett stated.

In 2013, Garrett had the privilege to visit every Catholic parish in metro-Atlanta. The one thing that he was both amazed by and despondent about from the experience was the number of empty seats he saw, particularly in churches (other than Christ the King) inside the perimeter. According to Garrett, this same situation exists when he has visited parishes in the NE USA and in Europe.

"In 1973, Father Arupe, who at the time was the General Secretary of the Jesuits, made an address titled 'Men and Women for Others' that became the catch phrase the Jesuits have used ever since for educating men and women," Garrett told the audience. "In Father Arupe's opinion, Jesuit education had failed to educate men and women for others. When Arupe first made this statement publicly, over 1/3 of the people in the audience left."

Garrett said the three things Arupe's speech "Men and Women for Others" (<http://onlineministries.creighton.edu/CollaborativeMinistry/men-for-others.html>) calls us to do to live for others are – live more simply, make no unjust profits, and affirm one's resolve to be an agent of change in society.

What is the importance of living for others?

Garrett reflected on his time at the Spring Hill College where he was getting a Masters in Theology, after he had been ordained a deacon in the church. He shared the recollection of his final exam.

"Before the process concluded, I had to go through an interview for my final exam," Garrett said. "I had 10 professors and for this final exam, each professor provided one question. I then could pick five of the questions and prepared to answer any of the five. So when it came time for the actual interview, I knew the question – but I still almost failed."

Garrett said this experience runs parallel to what the gospel of Matthew says in the parable of "The Sheep and the Goats" (Matthew 25:31-46).

"I would suggest we all have a final exam coming, and we know the questions involved:

- When did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?
- When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?
- When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?

If we fail that exam, we cannot say we didn't know the questions," Garrett stated.

He further added that to think that there is no final judgment is to not read the scripture. We will be asked how well did we care for our brothers and sisters.

Returning to the seminal question of the BELIEVES session – "What does it mean to be called to sainthood?" – Garrett told the audience that we are all called to sainthood.

The Baltimore Catechism answers the question "Why did God make me?" as follows – God made me to "know Him, love Him, and serve Him in this life and be happy with him in the next."

Mother Teresa stated we shouldn't be bashful about living to be a saint.

In the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Garrett feels one way this is being lived out is through Cristo Rey's addressing of the needs of those in need.

"Cristo Rey started in the United States in 1996 with a focus on the need to do better in serving our low income brothers and sisters," Garrett said. "Cristo Rey essentially developed a new economic formula when it was formed. Now, this year in Atlanta, Cristo Rey has reached the milestone of opening its 28<sup>th</sup> school in the United States – operating as "The school that works in the heart of Atlanta."

Cristo Rey has plans to open two more schools in the United States in the near future, but in the last year Cristo Rey schools graduated 1435 students in the US and all were accepted to college. According to Garrett, typically only 10-15% of graduates with similar demographics as Cristo Rey graduates are accepted to college.



Perhaps the most unique element of Cristo Rey's model is that students work while they are studying. As a result, corporate partners provide stipends to support Cristo Rey's operations which cover 60% of the cost for each student. Parents pay roughly 6-7% of the cost, and the remainder comes from other scholarships and grants.

"The work part of Cristo Rey's model is important," Garrett said. "Students are only 14 years old, but when they go to work they have the opportunity to be in an environment filled with adults and mentors. What we see quickly from this is how the students' behavior changes and how they appreciate more the learning in the classroom."

Garrett recalled a particular interaction with a student recently that illustrated the impact that being in the work environment is having on Cristo Rey's students.

"We're essentially a start-up right now, so one day this school year I was the bus driver to take students between their work locations and school," Garrett recalled. "When one particular young man name Zion who was working at Crawford & Company got on the bus I asked him how his work day went. He said, 'Great. Actually – more than great. They asked my opinion.'"

Garrett asked Zion what the question was that the team members at Crawford & Company asked him about. The young man replied, "What to do about the damage done in California as a result of the recent earthquake there?"

When Garrett asked Zion what his answer was, the young 14-year-old student at Cristo Rey stated, "Cleanup all the glass and send out more adjusters."

Garrett said he enjoys calling companies as well as getting calls from companies to hear how the Cristo Rey students are doing.

“The typical comment I hear is ‘let me tell you what our team of kids is doing.’ We get countless pictures of businesses’ teams with our students.”

Garrett believes that Cristo Rey provides a way to live out what Father Pedro Arupe said and make structural changes to systems that fail low income kids and families, and do as Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, ‘whatever you do to the least of my people, so you have done to me.’

Before closing his remarks and opening up the discussion for questions from the audience, Garrett wanted to share a prayer by Jesuit Priest Teilhard de Chardin titled ‘Patient Trust’ because he felt it speaks to the heart of the call we all have to sainthood and to live a more just society. The prayer reads:

Above all, trust in the slow work of God.  
We are quite naturally impatient in everything  
to reach the end without delay.  
We should like to skip the intermediate stages.  
We are impatient of being on the way to something  
unknown, something new.  
And yet it is the law of all progress  
that it is made by passing through  
some stages of instability—  
and that it may take a very long time.

And so I think it is with you;  
your ideas mature gradually—let them grow,  
let them shape themselves, without undue haste.  
Don’t try to force them on,  
as though you could be today what time  
(that is to say, grace and circumstances  
acting on your own good will)  
will make of you tomorrow.

Only God could say what this new spirit  
gradually forming within you will be.  
Give Our Lord the benefit of believing  
that his hand is leading you,  
and accept the anxiety of feeling yourself  
in suspense and incomplete.

After sharing ‘Patient Trust,’ Garrett opened the floor to questions and discussion – some of which focused on how Cristo Rey operates, and some focused on faith formation.



Walter Kozik, CTK parishioner, asked, "We always need to focus on prayer and reflection. How is that lived out at Cristo Rey?"

Garrett responded, "Everyday, we have Mass at midday. Only 40% of the students are Catholic, and attendance at Mass is voluntary. However, typically we have from 10-40 students attend each Mass."

Sharon Zukauckas followed by commenting on the importance of faith formation and teaching people to have a sense of dignity.

"Once we have knowledge and can hear the Lord, we can act with dignity," Zukauckas said. "The encyclicals teach us in our mind. The beauty of Pope Francis is he's showing us how to live it. The Lord doesn't call us to do big things, we're called to witness."

Bob Lyford, an independent agent with East Mountain Insurors, followed this with what proved to be the final remark of the session.

"It is so underrated to talk about sainthood. I think it is that individual model and call to sainthood that we've got to focus on."