

## TRAITS OF HOLY LIVES

i. *Heroic faith*, i.e. bearing witness with great generosity to Christ and the gospel. Historically, the primary model of heroic faith has been witness to the death, but the term may also include persistent risk-taking as well as a life in which other values are set aside for the sake of devotion and service. True heroic faith is healthy and life-affirming; it is not masochistic or suicidal.

ii. *The fruit of the Spirit*. We may expect those commemorated to have exhibited in an exemplary way the fruit of the Spirit to which Paul refers in Gal 5.22, 'love, joy, peace, patience, kind-ness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.' Their lives may not have been perfect, but those who knew them should have been aware of this complex but unified goal within them.

iii. *Christian engagement*. We may expect those who are commemorated to have participated actively in the life of the Christian community and to have contributed to its sense of mission and to its life and growth.

iv. *Recognition by the Christian Community*. The commemoration of holy people should have spontaneous roots and should grow from the testimony of those who knew them. The task of authority is to prevent the spread of inappropriate or misleading devotion, not to impose a commemoration which promotes a line of thought or boosts regional self-esteem. The larger church is not obliged to approve such recognition as local Christian communities may give to particular people; however, it should take them seriously.

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*LITURGICAL PRINCIPLES: principles to guide the revision of contemporary language common worship texts of The Anglican Church of Canada.* Faith Worship & Ministry of the Anglican Church of Canada, adopted by General Synod 2010.

## PROCEDURE

You are encouraged, in conversation with your bishop, to explore the observation of new commemorations: the celebration of individuals who, in their own time and place, showed forth the traits of holy lives — living expressions of the Paschal Mystery.

It is possible your community will resonate not only with your own local people, but also with the life and witness of an individual who has already been recognized by other Christian communities. Such communities may include another regional community, the wider diocese, another diocese, or another denomination. Our full communion relationship with the ELCIC invites us especially to engage with the holy people of their calendar.

Your community may not have had much experience in identifying people to be honoured by inclusion in your calendar. In doing so, however, we join the long history of Christians who have given thanks for holy lives in worship and prayer.

For more information, see:  
[www.anglican.ca/resources/liturgicalprinciples/](http://www.anglican.ca/resources/liturgicalprinciples/)  
contact: [escully@national.anglican.ca](mailto:escully@national.anglican.ca)

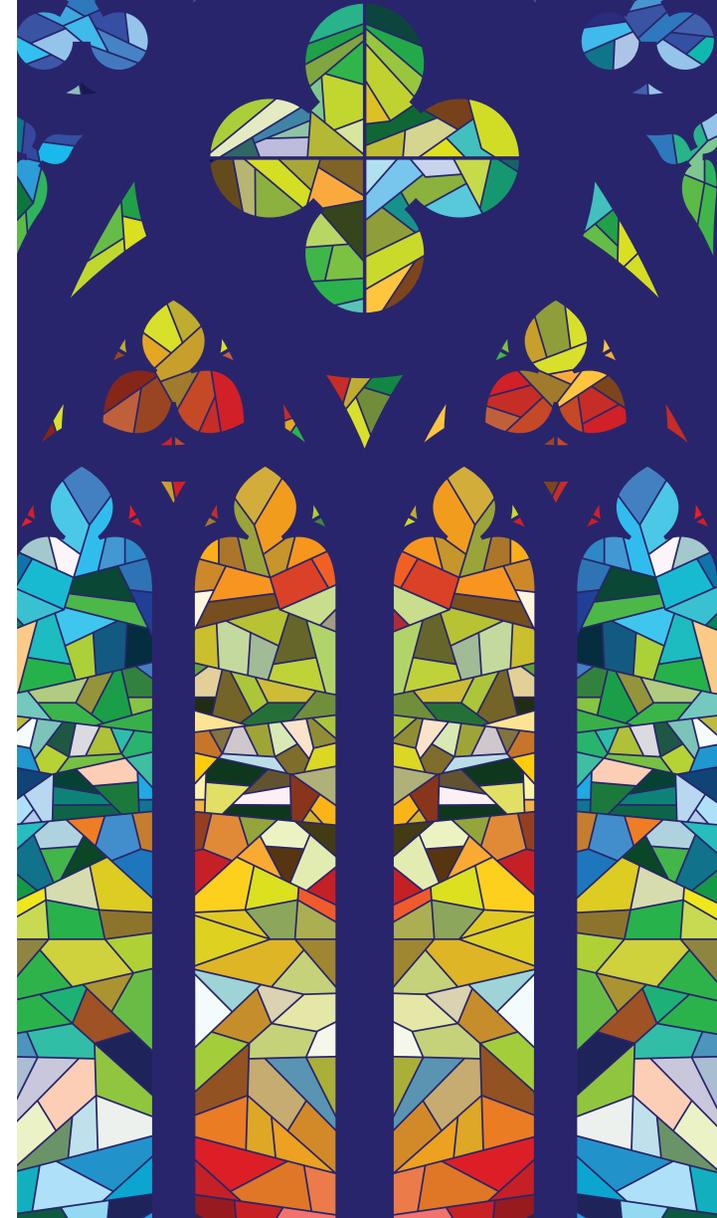
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# HOLY PEOPLE

Recognizing Christ in our communities



The Anglican Church of Canada

*The Glory of God is the human being fully alive.*

*—St. Irenaeus of Lyons*

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to help you think through ways of including holy people and events that are important to you in the calendar. (see *BAS pp. 22-33*)

One of the main principles guiding churches in adding commemorations, lesser festivals, and occasions over the last fifty years has been inculturation. This work leads us to engage and critique our specific contexts for their renewal and transformation, clothing our local liturgies in the garb and language of our immediate culture.

Churches around the world have looked for ways to include in their calendars holy people who are recognized universally, those of specific traditions and nations, as well as those of our local regions and communities. More than thirty years ago the *The Book of Alternative Services* proposed such a process for the Canadian church. We recognize that the work of distinctly Canadian and local discernment remains largely undone, and that an opportunity lies before us.

## PASCHAL MYSTERY

### BAPTISMAL IDENTITY

As Christians, our primary identity is in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through baptism we share in this, the Paschal Mystery.

### COMMEMORATIONS

All Sundays are a celebration of the Paschal Mystery. So too are the days when we commemorate the lives of holy people. Recognizing Christ at work in their lives in particular times and places helps us to see Christ's work in the world through his body, the church.

### LOCAL COMMUNITY AS THE CENTRE OF THE CHURCH

The model we have inherited from the apostolic church recognizes the local community gathered around the bishop as the full expression of the church catholic. This is why, for example, the local bishop is always prayed for first in our prayers for the church. The local eucharistic community is not the lowest rung of a hierarchical ladder, but rather the centre from which further relations of communion flow. Discernment of holiness of life in our sisters and brothers appropriately begins locally and radiates outwards. This is part of what it means to live within the "communion of saints." Across time and place, we share stories of these exemplary witnesses to the gospel. As we do this, each local church in a particular time and place spiritually feeds and is fed by, the life of others.

### LOCAL CALENDARS

Local eucharistic communities benefit from participating in the creation of their own calendars. The General Synod provides the basic common pattern for seasons, feasts, holy days, and national commemorations. The local community may add to this by marking occasions of local significance such as Harvest Thanksgiving, the Blessing of the Fleet, patronal festivals or feasts of title, as well as their feast of dedication. "It is appropriate for the Church, at regional and even local levels, to add the names of Christians whose lives reflected the mystery of Christ." (*BAS p. 14*) We honour and remember such people with thanksgiving.

### WIDER AFFIRMATION

Over time, the local celebration of holy ones may be recognized in wider circles of the church: deaneries, archdeaconries, regions, dioceses, ecclesiastical provinces, and even by our church nationally, through adoption by the General Synod.