

ENCOURAGEMENT

October 2025 – Issue 171

‘Carlo and Pier Giorgio’

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Are you familiar with these two names? What have they got in common? Why did they hit the news last month? Well, first of all they are both young men. You might be saying that is obvious from the names... So what else have they got in common? Both died young and both have become Saints. On the 7th of September 2025, on a bright sunny day in Rome, Pope Leo XIV pronounced the words of Canonisation declaring both young men as Saints for our time. The ceremonial Mass was joyful and attended by many thousands of people especially the young (approx. 80.000).

Carlo Acutis was born in London though his family was Italian, and they returned to Italy when he was just a baby. Born on the 3rd of May 1991 he died on the 12th October 2006 at the age of fifteen. As you can see from the picture he could be seen as any teenager of today. He had a love of many of the things that interest youths of today and especially computer games and then anything technological. He also had a desire to help others. His family were an ordinary but well-off family but had a great interest in their children. Carlo was the first and indeed following on much later they also had a twin boy and girl who actually attended the Canonisation, his twin brother Michele doing the reading and Francesca carrying the offertory gifts. They were actually born four years after his death almost to the day on 12th October. His mother, who so wanted more family, and had to ‘lose’ Carlo, had a dream in which Carlo told her that she would be a mother again. She was going to adopt. Carlo grew up as a cheerful and happy child but with a keen interest in things spiritual and holy. Amazingly, as his parent were not as committed to their faith and it was his uncle and aunt that encouraged young Carlo. By the time he was seven he wanted to go to daily Mass and was often escorted by his uncle. If Mass was difficult to attend, he would pop into church on his way home to speak to Jesus.



He also has a passion for service and would happily share what he had and give things to those less fortunate. He gave his sleeping bag to a man on the street he met on the way to church and often defended others who were bullied. He also sought to help elderly and disabled people in his community as well as refugees. But interest in the computer led him deeper into investigating things of faith. He taught himself design and graphics and by the time he was 11 he was becoming quite skilled... But was also self-disciplined and he limited himself to playing video games for one hour a day, however, as a form of penance and spiritual discipline. He documented his spiritual progress by keeping a diary

in which he wrote down his “good marks” for good behaviour and “bad marks” for when he failed to live up to his own expectations.

His passion for the Eucharist and prayer (also the Rosary) led him to investigate Eucharistic miracles. He

used to say, “There are queues in front of a concert, in front of a football match, but I don’t see these queues in front of the Blessed Sacrament” - So, for him the Eucharist was the centre of his life. He built a website to document eucharistic miracles around the world, and he eventually catalogued more than 150 miracles, listing them by country and date in nearly 20 different languages. For each miracle he created a web page that could be downloaded and printed; he also included maps, videos, and a virtual museum on the site.

The website became a helpful tool of religious instruction for many parishes around the world. It was also regarded by the church as an example of how technology and the Internet can be used for spiritual good and to spread the Gospel. Many people around the world now have been to the exhibition that was formed. Not only did he inspire others but he brought both his parents back to practising their faith, his mother actually enrolled in a course so that she could answer his question as she

did not have the knowledge. It was she who spoke of him and his passion for computers after his death. She says that he was the light side of the web and that was his Apostolate.

He died after a short illness first believed to be a kind of flu but emerged as acute myeloid leukaemia, in Milan. This young man had a relationship with Jesus and his saying which sums up his life was **“to always be close to Jesus - that’s my life plan”**. The Eucharist was his ‘highway to heaven’ This plan obviously took him there. He got to holiness through the everyday life in a family and his passion for spreading the gospel, especially the Eucharist.

Pier Giorgio Frassati too came from a wealthy family. Born in 1901 and died in 1924. He too had a passion for spreading the Gospel and in getting others to follow Jesus. As a student he would organise hiking and mountaineering trip with some friends and invite any one to join. He did not only invite the ‘committed’ but also those who were atheists and generally cynical. As they started on the journey he would start with the rosary, much to even his friends’ surprise, and by the time they had reached the top discussions ensued. As Pope Leo said at his canonisation:

“Pier Giorgio encountered the Lord through school and church groups — Catholic Action, the Conferences of St. Vincent de Paul, the Dominican Third Order — and he bore witness to God with his joy of living and of being a Christian in prayer, friendship and charity. This was so evident that seeing him walking the streets of Turin with carts full of supplies for the poor, his friends renamed him "Frassati Impresa Trasporti" (Frassati Transport Company)! Even today, Pier Giorgio's life is a beacon for lay spirituality. For him, faith was not a private devotion, but it was driven by the power of the Gospel and his membership in church associations. He was also generously committed to society, contributed to political life and devoted himself ardently to the service of the poor.”

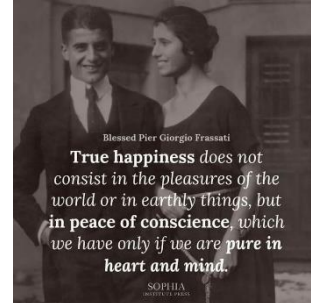
He was not afraid to publicly proclaim the Gospel and stand up for the rights of others. He had a deep love of the poor in a humble and practical way. It was in one of his visits he contracted Polio and like Carlo died very quickly.

Both young men lived the Beatitudes. Both young men showed the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. Both of them had an Apostolic outreach and both of

them longed for holiness. Born 90 years apart yet they were bound by a love of the Eucharist and a life of the Gospel.

Holiness is accessible to all people which was their belief and proved by their ordinary yet extra-ordinary lives. May we too aspire to this ... Halina Holman ©

Saints Carlo and Pier Giorgio pray for us...



(Photo by Cath Manley)

Quotes from the two Saints

"The higher we go, the better we shall hear the voice of Christ."

"Charity is not enough; we need social reform. The Gospel shows us this clearly."

"Our true homeland is Heaven; therefore, let us strive to take more souls there."

"Verso l'alto" ("To the heights") His aim for spiritual and personal excellence.

St. Pier Giorgio

"All people are born as originals, but many live as photocopies."

"If you stand in front of the sun you become sunburnt, if you stand before the Eucharistic you become holy."

"Not me, but God."

Sadness is looking at ourselves, happiness is looking towards God."

Saint Carlo Acutis

Feast Days in October

1st St. Thérèse of the Child Jesus and the Holy Face

2nd The Guardian Angels

4th St. Francis of Assisi

5th Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

6th St. Bruno

7th Our Lady of the Rosary

9th St. John Henry Newman 10th St. Paulinus of York

11th St. Pope John XXIII

12th Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

13th St. Edward the Confessor

15th St. Teresa of Avila

16th St. Margaret Mary Alacoque 17th St. Ignatius of Antioch

18th St. Luke Evangelist

19th Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

22nd St. Pope John Paul II

26th Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

28th Saints Simon & Jude Apostles

(1st November: All Saints – Holy Day of Obligation)