

Fr. Martin's Reflection – September 14, 2025

Dear Friends in Christ,

What a week it was for the Church. The canonization of St. Carlo Acutis (aged 15) and St. Pier Giorgio Frassati (aged 24) on Sunday, September 7. The canonization of these two young men should, I hope, be an inspiration to all our young people of the power of prayer and having a relationship with God, and how that relationship can be so intimate and transforming.

From the moment of his conception, St. Carlo Acutis changed lives. For his mom and dad their hearts were filled with joy, hope, and love for the cherished child. For St. Carlo's extended family, they waited for his arrival with great excitement and joy for the future. He was a very much wanted child. The changes he brought were not expected or externally desired. What St. Carlo ultimately brought to his family that was way beyond joy, hope, and excitement for the future was faith. From a very young age he reintroduced his mom and dad to the love of God. That reintroduction was extended to his wider family and to all who encountered him, from those in his neighborhood, parish, school, and now us, the world at large. His message is God's message, the message of love.

St. Pier Giorgio Frassati was born on April 6, 1901, Turin, Italy. He was dedicated to social justice issues and joined several charitable organizations, including Catholic Action and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, to better aid the poor and less fortunate living in his hometown of Turin. Coming from a well-known family, his dad owned the liberal newspaper, *La Stampa*, and his mom was a world-renowned painter. She had sold works to King Victor Emmanuel III. St. Pier's inclinations to help others manifested in his childhood. There was one occasion as a child when he answered the door to find a mother begging with her son who was shoeless. His response was to take off his shoes and give them to the child. On another occasion his father refused to help a man who came to the door because he was drunk. The sobbing Pier told his mother of this, and she told him to find the man and bring him to the home for something to eat.

St. Pier was dedicated to works of social action that would unite people together in fellowship as a means of combating inequalities (unionization). He was an opponent of fascism. He was arrested in Rome while protesting alongside the 1921 Young Catholic Workers Congress. He was involved with student groups as well as the Apostleship of Prayer and Catholic Action to which he dedicated himself. He often said: "Charity is not enough; we need social reform." He helped establish a newspaper entitled *Momento* whose principles were based on Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*. Upon his graduation, his father offered him either a car or a sizable fund. He chose the fund so he could give it to the poor rather than use it himself. He also provided a bed for a tuberculosis sufferer on one occasion as well as supporting the three children of an ill widow and finding a place for an evicted woman.

Let us take a moment to take all this in – these two young men, one 15, the other 24, have touched the lives of so many, changing them for the better by simply living their lives with faith and love. Parents, place your children in the protective care of these two wonderful young examples of goodness. Young people, look to these two young men as your example and guide for life.

St. Carlo and St. Pier pray for us.

Fr. Martin