



HOLY MASS WITH CANONIZATIONS OF THE BLESSED:

- PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI

- CARLO ACUTIS

PAPAL MASS

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV

St. Peter's Square

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, 7 September 2025

Pope Leo XIV Impromptu remarks before Holy Mass and the Rite of Canonization

Good morning, everyone! Happy Sunday and welcome! Thank you!

Brothers and sisters, today is a wonderful feast for all of Italy, for the whole Church, for the whole world! Before beginning the solemn celebration of the Canonization, I wanted to greet you all and say a few words, because, while the celebration is very solemn, it is also a day of great joy! I wished especially to greet the many young people who have come for this Holy Mass! It is truly a blessing from the Lord to be here together with all of you who have come from different countries. It is truly a gift of faith that we want to share.

After Holy Mass, if you can be patient for a little while, I hope to come and greet you in the Square. So, if you are far away now, let us hope that we can at least greet each other afterwards. I greet the families of the two Blessed, soon to be Saints, the official Delegations, the many bishops and priests who have come. Let us give all of them a round of applause; and thank you for being here, consecrated men and women, and Catholic Action!

Let us prepare ourselves prayerfully for this liturgical celebration, with open hearts, and truly desire to receive this grace from the Lord. Let each of us also feel in our hearts what Pier Giorgio and Carlo experienced, namely this love for Jesus Christ, especially in the Eucharist, but also in the poor, in our brothers and sisters. All of you, all of us too, are called to be Saints. May God bless you! Enjoy this celebration! Thank you for being here!

* * *

Dear brothers and sisters,

In the first reading, we heard a question: [Lord,] “who has learned your counsel, unless you have given wisdom and sent your holy spirit from on high?” (*Wis* 9:17). This question comes after two young Blessed, Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis, were proclaimed saints, and this is providential because in the Book of Wisdom, this question is attributed to a young man like them: King Solomon. Upon the death of his father David, he realized that he had many things: power, wealth, health, youth, beauty, and the entire kingdom. It was precisely this great abundance of resources that raised a question in his heart: “What must I do so that nothing is lost?” Solomon understood that the only way to find an answer was to ask God for an even greater gift, that of his wisdom, so that he might know God’s plans and follow them faithfully. He realized, in fact, that only in this way would everything find its place in the Lord’s great plan. Yes, because the greatest risk in life is to waste it outside of God’s plan.

Jesus, too, in the Gospel, speaks to us of a plan to which we must commit wholeheartedly. He says: “Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me cannot be my disciple” (*Lk* 14:27); and again: “none of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions” (v. 33). He calls us to abandon ourselves without hesitation to the adventure that he offers us, with the intelligence and strength that comes from his Spirit, that we can receive to the extent that we empty ourselves of the things and ideas to which we are attached, in order to listen to his word.

Many young people, over the centuries, have had to face this crossroad in their lives. Think of Saint Francis of Assisi, like Solomon, he too was young and rich, thirsty for glory and fame. That is why he went to war, hoping to be knighted and adorned with honors. But Jesus appeared to him along the way and asked him to reflect on what he was doing. Coming to his senses, he asked God a simple question: “Lord, what do you want me to do?” (*Legend of the Three Companions*, cap. II: *Fonti Francescane*, 1401). From there, he changed his life and began to write a different story: the wonderful story of holiness that we all know, stripping himself of everything to follow the Lord (cf. *Lk* 14:33), living in poverty and preferring the love of his brothers and sisters, especially the weakest and smallest, to his father’s gold, silver and precious fabrics.

How many similar saints we could recall! Sometimes we portray them as great figures, forgetting that for them it all began when, while still young, they said “yes” to God and gave themselves to him completely, keeping nothing for themselves. Saint Augustine recounts that, in the “tortuous and tangled knot” of his life, a voice deep within him said: “I want you” (*Confessions*, II, 10,18). God gave him a new direction, a new path, a new reason, in which nothing of his life was lost.

In this setting, today we look to Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati and Saint Carlo Acutis: a young man from the early 20th century and a teenager from our own day, both in love with Jesus and ready to give everything for him.

Pier Giorgio encountered the Lord through school and church groups — Catholic Action, the Conferences of Saint Vincent, the FUCI (Italian Catholic University Federation), 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 ecclesial associations. He was also generously committed to society, contributed to political life and devoted himself ardently to the service of the poor.

Carlo, for his part, encountered Jesus in his family, thanks to his parents, Andrea and Antonia — who are here today with his two siblings, Francesca and Michele — and then at school, and above all in the sacraments celebrated in the parish community. He grew up naturally integrating prayer, sport, study and charity into his days as a child and young man.

Both Pier Giorgio and Carlo cultivated their love for God and for their brothers and sisters through simple acts, available to everyone: daily Mass, prayer, and especially Eucharistic Adoration. Carlo used to say: “In front of the sun, you get a tan. In front of the Eucharist, you become a saint!” And again: “Sadness is looking at yourself; happiness is looking at God. Conversion is nothing more than shifting your gaze from below to above; a simple movement of the eyes is enough.” Another essential practice for them was frequent Confession. Carlo wrote: “The only thing we really have to fear is sin;” and he marvelled because — in his own words — “people are so concerned with the beauty of their bodies and do not care about the beauty of their souls.” Finally, both had a great devotion to the saints and to the Virgin Mary, and they practiced charity generously. Pier Giorgio said: “Around the poor and the sick, I see a light that we do not have” (Nicola Gori, *Al prezzo della vita: L'Osservatore romano*, 11 February 2021). He called charity “the foundation of our religion” and, like Carlo, he practiced it above all through small, concrete gestures, often hidden, living what Pope Francis called “a holiness found in our next-door neighbours” (Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 7).

Even when illness struck them and cut short their young lives, not even this stopped them nor prevented them from loving, offering themselves to God, blessing him and praying to him for themselves and for everyone. One day Pier Giorgio said: “The day of my death will be the most beautiful day of my life” (Irene Funghi, *I giovani assieme a Frassati: un compagno nei nostri cammini tortuosi: Avvenire*, 2 agosto 2025). In his last photo, which shows him climbing a mountain in the Val di Lanzo, with his face turned towards his goal, he wrote: “Upwards” (Ibid). Moreover, Carlo, who was even younger than Pier Giorgio, loved to say that heaven has always been waiting for us, and that to love tomorrow is to give the best of our fruit today.

Dear friends, Saints Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis are an invitation to all of us, especially young people, not to squander our lives, but to direct them upwards and make them masterpieces. They encourage us with their words: “Not I, but God,” as Carlo used to say. And Pier Giorgio: “If you have God at the centre of all your actions, then you will reach the end.” This is the simple but winning formula of their holiness. It is also the type of witness we are called to follow, in order to enjoy life to the full and meet the Lord in the feast of heaven.