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Ramona Zepeda

In *The Power and the Glory*, the main character, the whisky priest, is a drunkard. He also has a child. He is a coward: letting others be taken to prison for his sake. Yet in the end, he dies for his faith, his people, his God. The questions that come out of the book are: what is the whisky priest? Is he a saint? What is Graham Greene saying about saints? The primary theme of Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* is the humanness of saints. Greene's theme is that saints are very human, they are not estranged from the human race, and it is better so because they are more inspirational when they are human.

What is a saint anyway? A saint is a person who goes to heaven after he dies. A saint struggles to overcome his faults, his sins. The lives led by saints are not wholly perfect. There is only one saint whose life was perfect and sinless, and that was the queen of saints, Mary. All of the other saints wrestled with their own particular sin or sins. St. Jerome is an example of this. He had a sour temper and had a hard time controlling it. Many saints sinned over and over again. Some deserted and denied Christ, as St. Peter did. The whisky priest could be said to be saint of this sort. He has a fault and has committed a grave sin, but he tries to make up for it and dies for his flock. Not all the saints are as earthy, as tied to the world as the whisky priest, but they are all human.

Saints are not angels. They have fleshly desires, human faults. People usually misunderstand saints; they see saints as angel-like beings without any real human characteristics. It is because of this misconception that people see holiness as something unattainable and distant. This is seen in *The Power and the Glory* when a mother is

reading the lives of the saints to her son and two daughters. She reads about a saint's childhood and he is portrayed as a goody two shoes. The saint is said to be the sort of child who always turned the other cheek and sneaked away to read holy books. The son is very bored and does not believe that saints are really like this. He and his father have the same view that is summed up in the father's words, "I don't believe all that they write in these books. We are all human" (pg. 28). The angel-like portrayal of saints is not believable.

When something is not believable, it is not inspiring. The saints should be inspirational and they cannot be so when they are portrayed as angel-like. Human saints are actually more inspirational because of the splendid struggles that they have with their sins. Human saints have to strive harder for holiness than angel saints would, and that makes them more of an inspiration. This can be seen in the whisky priest's death. He is not a perfect man, he even admits that he is a bad priest, but his death inspires the young skeptical boy to reject the ideals of the state, harbor a priest, and believe in saints. This boy spits on the butt of the lieutenant's revolver. He no longer believes that the state will give him happiness and reality. He also receives the newly arrived priest and pays attention when his mother reads of the martyrdom of a saint. This change comes about because of the death of a very human saint.

The reason that the human saintliness is more real and inspirational is the humility that is in human saintliness. People who try to be angel saints end up having no humility and no charity like the pious woman that the priest meets in jail. The priest is worried for her type of person because "they came to death so often in a state of invincible complacency, full of uncharity" (pg.127). The pious woman is also very proud

that she is in prison for having had a holy book. She is very sure of herself and looks down on all the other prisoners. There is no humility or charity or pity for sinners in her. She is trying to be an angel-like saint, and trying to do it on her own, without God. She will fail; she will not be saint. She is headed in the wrong direction with the wrong guide. Being a saint is not trying to run from one's humanity, but trying to perfect oneself as a human. Sainthood is becoming a perfect human, with God's grace.

Saints are not angels. Human nature is not a thing to fear and run from. Rather, it is to be used as means to get to heaven. God does not want men to try to be angels, He wants them to be human. And, at the same time, He wants them to be perfect. The saints are simply perfect humans. The humanness in saints is the primary theme of *The Power and the Glory*.