

# *Dare to be more*

THE WITNESS OF  
BLESSED  
CARLO ACUTIS

*Colleen & Matt Swaim*



Liguori

*Imprimi Potest:* Stephen T. Rehrauer, CSsR, Provincial  
Denver Province, the Redemptorists

Published by Liguori Publications, Liguori, Missouri 63057  
Liguori Publications, a nonprofit corporation, is an apostolate of  
the Redemptorists (Redemptorists.com).

To order this book, visit [Liguori.org](http://Liguori.org) or call 800-325-9521.

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ISBN 978-0-7648-2855-3

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Printed in the United States of America  
First Edition  
25 24 23 22 21 / 5 4 3 2 1

Cover design: Wendy Barnes  
Cover illustration: detail of Blessed Carlo Acutis by Jeff Albrecht;  
tattoo artwork adapted from Shutterstock  
Interior photos of Blessed Carlo Acutis courtesy of [carloacutis.com](http://carloacutis.com)

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**BLESSED CARLO ACUTIS (1991–2006)**

**FEAST DAY:** OCTOBER 12 ✕ **PATRONAGE:** INTERNET

“Dare to be more because who you are is more important than any possession. What good are possessions or appearances? You can become what God your Creator knows you are, if only you realize that you are called to something greater. Ask the help of the Holy Spirit and confidently aim for the great goal of holiness. In this way, you will not be a photocopy. You will be fully yourself.”

*CHRISTUS VIVIT* (107),

POST-SYNODAL EXHORTATION TO YOUNG PEOPLE  
AND TO THE ENTIRE PEOPLE OF GOD, POPE FRANCIS, 2019

# BLESSED CARLO ACUTIS



MIRACLE-WORKING  
COMPUTER WHIZ —  
AND MORE

# Who Is Carlo Acutis?

“Everyone is born as an original, but many people end up dying as photocopies.”

*Blessed Carlo Acutis*

He was bad at soccer but loved it anyway. He was a gamer and comics fan who played Halo, Pokémon, and the saxophone, and dressed up like Spider-Man. He made goofy home videos of his dogs, and his regular “uniform” was a rugby shirt, sneakers, and aviator sunglasses. Based on his pastimes and fashion, he would have fit in with many kids who grew up in the 1990s and early 2000s.

But he was also a deeply spiritual and religious young man. He went to daily Mass, asked to receive first Communion a year early—at age seven—and persuaded his family to help him buy sleeping bags for the homeless. His spiritual resolve set him apart. He gave countless people a deeper appreciation for the sacraments, and by the time he was fifteen, he had compiled a research project he called Eucharistic Miracles. His work would be displayed in parishes and at events across the world.

His name is Carlo Acutis. He lived only fifteen years and is the first person from the millennial generation to be formally beatified by the Catholic Church.

Carlo was born on May 3, 1991, just three months before a British software engineer (Tim Berners-Lee) introduced the world to the web browser. Carlo was born in London, where his parents, Andrea Acutis and Antonia Salzano, then

worked. A couple of weeks after his birth, on May 18, they had him baptized at Our Lady of Dolours Church in Chelsea. He was named after his paternal grandfather, Carlo, who was also his godfather. His maternal grandmother was chosen to be his godmother.

His parents' jobs meant they often relocated. Life in Germany and Milan gave him different types of cultural experiences. Born into a family who was well-off and traveled, Carlo could have become overindulged and thought only of himself. But he strove to see Christ in everyone, from teachers and fellow students to homeless people.

Carlo's parents weren't actively practicing their faith when he was born, so it was a bit of a surprise to them that their child would make Catholic devotions a priority, starting at a young age. He insisted on going to Sunday and daily Mass. He even asked to stop at random churches that the family drove by.



**Born in London on May 3, 1991, to Italian parents, Carlo Acutis was baptized on May 18.**

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*Blessed Carlo Acutis is often called the unofficial patron saint of the internet. That includes gamers, computer programmers, social media users, and related cyber communicators. If you ever become a canonized saint, what do you hope to be patron of?*

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As Carlo's love for Jesus and his devotion to our Lord grew, his mother returned to the faith. Eventually, his father did, too. Because of Carlo's intense commitment to the Eucharist, he got permission to receive his first holy Communion a year earlier than most of his classmates. His first reception of the

Eucharist took place when he was seven, on June 16, 1998. A year later, Rajesh Mohur, Carlo's dear friend and caretaker, asked to be baptized. The two had had many deep talks about faith. Rajesh said Carlo's witness and theological wisdom led Rajesh to become a Christian. Imagine being an adult receiving baptism and having an eight-year-old as your primary catechist!

While he was alive, Carlo was an only child. Some people who knew Carlo said that because no other children lived in his household, he sometimes got lonely. Perhaps that is a reason he struck up so many relationships with adults. Kids often aren't buddies with grown-ups, but Carlo's friends included teachers and the adults who worked for his family. They recognized that Carlo was wise and mature for his age.

As he approached high school, Carlo watched the people closest to him find faith in Jesus. However, he was troubled seeing some of his classmates go through catechism classes, receive the sacrament of confirmation, and then skip Mass.

They might come back at Christmas or Easter, but usually that was it. He worried that people might think that once they were confirmed, they didn't need anything from the Church until they got married or needed their own children baptized. He was especially worried that many of them might never go to Mass again.

Carlo came to fully understand the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, and it broke his heart to see many Catholics ignore the gift that our Lord gives us in the Blessed Sacrament. So, at age fourteen, he started working on an idea.

With his natural ability to program computers, Carlo decided to combine his love for Christ in the Eucharist with coding. On a website he created, he compiled data on all the eucharistic miracles he could find. This was the early 2000s, when social media platforms that we now use every day were still being developed. Nothing like Carlo's idea was available in the early 2000s.

In his research, Carlo found dozens of eucharistic miracles. He discovered stories of saints and mystics who had experienced powerful, hopeful feelings and more when receiving the Eucharist. He wrote down information about people who had been miraculously healed from physical and spiritual problems after receiving holy Communion. The project grew larger as Carlo continued to collect stories, pictures, and even scientific data about these mysterious occurrences. Today that site makes information on those miracles available in seventeen languages. Its name is [miracolieucaaristici.org](http://miracolieucaaristici.org), which is Italian for "eucharistic miracles."

**[miracolieucaaristici.org](http://miracolieucaaristici.org)**: The website that Carlo built.

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*In his First Letter to Timothy, St. Paul implores his young coworker for Christ to “let no one have contempt for your youth, but set an example for those who believe, in speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity” (1 Timothy 4:12). What are some ways you can be a role model? How can you be like Paul and encourage young leaders?*

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Carlo did much of his work in his last year of life. In early October 2006, at fifteen, Carlo was diagnosed with acute promyelocytic leukemia. Right after that, Carlo's health got worse quickly and shockingly. He received the sacrament of the anointing of the sick on October 10, 2006. The next day, he went into a coma. Carlo died on October 12. He had wanted to donate his organs, but the leukemia had ruined them.

Incredibly, in only one and a half decades and just weeks after his diagnosis, a teen who had set his world on fire for Christ was gone. He was an original, not a photocopy. And while his life for Christ was brief, through the grace of God he did so much for so many.

The calls for Carlo to be recognized as a saint came almost right away. For Carlo's family and friends, this was a bit of a surprise. They had known he was an extraordinary young man, but seeing the countless people who had been touched by Carlo's witness moved them. Some were classmates whose families had gone through divorce. Carlo had supported them with prayer and kindness. Others were people who had fallen on hard times, and Carlo had used his own resources to provide food and blankets. Still others had been affected in a positive way by his eucharistic miracles project.

In 2013, the Congregation for the Causes of Saints of the Catholic Church formally recognized Carlo Acutis as a Servant

of God, meaning that the people who look into the lives of possible saints could proceed. That same year, a boy in Brazil who had been suffering from a pancreatic disease was miraculously healed after his mother prayed for Carlo to intercede (step in). The proposed miracle was sent to the people in charge of investigating Carlo's cause



for sainthood. After experts in medicine and theology approved the case, the proposed miracle was approved on February 21, 2020. That meant Pope Francis could beatify him. Carlo Acutis had spent countless hours online telling people about miracles. Now, officially, he had participated in one!

The ceremony beatifying Carlo took place in his favorite town, Assisi, on October 10, 2020. He is now called "Blessed," putting him one step away from sainthood in the Catholic Church. One more miracle that is credited to his intercession is needed first.

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*If, like Carlo, you found out you only had days or moments to live, how would you feel? What would you say about the way you've lived out your faith? How might friends and family comment about your witness to Christ and the way you lived your life?*

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The Mass honoring Carlo was held amid a global pandemic and fourteen years to the day from the time he had received the

anointing of the sick before going into a coma in 2006. Around 3,000 people attended in person, including family members, classmates, and strangers who had been touched by his work. The crowds were small because of COVID-19 restrictions. But



**In 1995 Carlo started kindergarten in Milan.**

it is fitting that countless viewers all over the world got to stream the beatification Mass of this computer whiz online!

Four years after his death—on the exact anniversary of his passing—Carlo's mother gave birth to twins, a boy and a girl named Michele and Francesca. They also were present at Carlo's beatification.

Think of what it must have been like to be ten years old and witnessing your late older brother be officially recognized as a Blessed in the Catholic Church!

A lot can be said about who Carlo is and why his humility, creativity, and joy were so powerful. But maybe the strongest aspect of his witness is the way he shows us that everyday people can be saints. Carlo's ability to relate to people was on full display as his remarkably well-preserved body was made available in Assisi for public veneration in 2020, wearing jeans, sneakers, and a quarter-zip sweatshirt. Blessed Carlo Acutis, pray for us!



## MEMORY VERSE

### 2 TIMOTHY 1:9



*He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began.*

### *Saintly Challenges*

- Think of people in your life who are strong examples of a Christian witness. Ask them when they first became serious about their personal prayer life with God and why their Catholic faith is so important to them.
- You can view and download many color photos from Carlo's childhood at [carloacutis.com](http://carloacutis.com). Do they remind you of your own family albums? Look at the photos and write a few words or phrases that you think describe Carlo well.
- Carlo was baptized on May 18, 1991, and received his first holy Communion on June 16, 1998. Do you know the dates of your own baptism and first Communion? If not, ask your parents or your parish for them and think of some small, meaningful ways to remember them each year.