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Synod Patrons: Young People on Path to Canonization

The Synod on youth and vocation has as its patrons young people who died in the last decades and lived a life of heroic virtue.

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One of the surprises of the Synod on youth and vocation are its patrons. The informal list is entitled "Young Witnesses," and includes canonized persons and others in the

beatification process. They all have similar aspects in common, they lived passionate lives with great ideals.

For example, **Thérèse Deshade Kapangala**. This 24-year-old girl from the Congo was preparing to enter the Congregation of the Holy Family. However, one Sunday she participated in street protests, and when the army fired on protesters she covered a girl with her body and saved her life, even though she died.

Then, there's Hungarian priest **Janos Brenner**, killed in an ambush when taking communion to the sick. He was two weeks from his 26th birthday. He was very apostolic, which bothered the communist dictators.

There are also many celibate lay young people who sought sanctity in their ordinary occupations, their studies or their work.

Spanish **Montse Grases** is a great example. She was passionate about basketball, tennis, music and theater. She lived with a contagious faith and optimism, despite the harsh cancer that took her before her 18th birthday. She had surrendered her life to God through Opus Dei, and her example allowed many of her friends to discover the joy of the Christian life.

Another hero is Italian **Carlo Acutis**, who died in 2006 at the age of 15. He was a normal teenager, who was passionate about computer science and designed several web pages. When he died, his funeral was full of poor people, who he had secretly carried sleeping bags and food to during his life.

Next is **Gianluca Firetti**, a farming expert and soccer player, who at age 18 discovered that he had a tumor. He lived an impressive example of

faith and courage. He did not get carried away by resentment toward those who did not visit him or envy those who were better than him. He wrote a book with a priest in which he shows how fighting and friendship with God made him a giant.

The synod also shares the life of **Chiara Badano**, a rebellious, yet generous teenager who asked for the gift of loving the most unfriendly at her confirmation. She died at 18, peaceful and calm despite her illness.

There are also young people who lived as saints while dating and throughout marriage. For example **Chiara Maria Bruno**, a Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Technology student, who was dating Stefano. She died at 25, yet never lost her smile. She said she was not afraid of death, rather to die far from Christ.

Also **Carlota Nobile**, who studied Art History and played the violin. She also wrote and had a blog. While she was not always a practicing Catholic, she listened to a homily by the pope and felt challenged to confess and take the faith seriously. She died in 2013, at 24 years old.

Chiara Corbella Petrillo, who died in 2012, also appears on the list of patrons. During her third pregnancy, she was diagnosed with a tumor, but decided not to start therapy, so as not to endanger the child's life. She is considered as an example that "love is greater than fear or death."