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**Padua Franciscan High School**

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# Press Release

## Padua Obtains Relic of Soon-to-Be Saint: Blessed Carlo Acutis

PARMA, Ohio – (September 4, 2025) Padua Franciscan High School has obtained a rare first-class relic of Blessed Carlo Acutis, who will be canonized a saint by Pope Leo XIV on Sunday, September 7, 2025 at the Vatican during a Papal Mass in St. Peter's Square.

Padua Chaplain Friar Johnpaul Cafiero, OFM applied for the relic, and after a year-long process, travelled to Assisi, Italy where he was presented with five strands of Blessed Carlo Acutis' hair.

Friar JP visited Carlo, the Catholic Church's (soon-to-be) first millennial saint, at his tomb in the Church of Mary Major in Assisi over the summer. He prayed in front of his body, which is kept in a glass coffin, and shows no sign of decay (even though he died in October 2006).

"It's a beautiful place, where Carlo himself wanted to be. He said he wanted to be in Assisi, with Saint Francis. He had a great love for Saint Francis, and so I think it's so appropriate for us, as a Franciscan school, to have this wonderful model of what it means to live not only a Christian life, a Catholic life, but a Franciscan life."

"I think he's a great model for our students, and what an honor for us," Cafiero said. "We're the only chapel, the only school in Ohio that, to my knowledge, has a first-class relic of Carlo Acutis."

Padua now has four first-class relics on its campus, including its patrons – St. Francis of Assisi (bone), St. Clare of Assisi (ashes) and St. Anthony of Padua (bone).

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**School Background:** Padua Franciscan High School is located at 6740 State Road in Parma, Ohio. Padua is a college-preparatory, co-educational school with 800 students and 13,000 alumni. Padua was founded by Franciscans in 1961 and bases its educational philosophy on the life and spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi. The school's mission is to develop the unique talents of each student, while giving them the skills they need to succeed in college and beyond.

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## What is a First-Class Relic?

A first-class relic is a part of the saint's physical body, and as such, is the highest classification of relics. Examples of first-class relics include pieces of bone, hair, or blood of the saints, and they are considered among the most sacred objects in the Catholic Church.

## About Carlo Acutis

Born in London in 1991, Blessed Carlo Acutis moved with his family to Assisi, where he grew up participating in the school band, playing video games and Pokémon, and enjoying soccer. Additionally, like one of his role models, St. Francis of Assisi, Blessed Carlo Acutis loved animals, including his four dogs, two cats and multiple goldfish.

Blessed Carlo Acutis felt called to help others and organized missions with his classmates to go into the community and feed the poor. He put together information about Eucharistic Miracles that became the basis for the International Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles, which continues to tour the world to this day.

At the age of 15, Blessed Carlo Acutis was diagnosed with an advanced form of leukemia and passed away weeks later.

"It was so aggressive that when they were on their way to the hospital for testing, Carlo told his mom that he wouldn't be coming home, that he was going to go meet Jesus on the highway to Heaven," Cafiero said.

While Carlo Acutis had done good works on earth, his road to sainthood required review from the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, the Vatican office that examines whether the holy person lived a life of heroic virtue and whether God has confirmed their holiness through miracles.

If the pope agrees with a recommendation of the dicastery that the candidate for sainthood lived a life of heroic virtue, he or she is declared Venerable. Then, normally two documented miracles are needed – one for the candidate to be declared Blessed, and a second miracle for canonization.

The first of these miracles attributed to Carlo was the cure of a young Brazilian boy, Matheus Vianna, who suffered from a pancreatic disease and struggled to eat. His mother, Luciana, discovered the story of Carlo Acutis, and prayed to him. Then, she met with Carlo's mother, who gave Luciana one of his t-shirts. After receiving the shirt, the young boy requested something to eat, and despite previous diagnoses, was able to consume the food.

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## **(Continued) About Carlo Acutis**

“The doctors said, ‘It’s a miracle. There’s no way, no medical explanation why all of a sudden, his issue was gone,’” Cafiero said. “Now Carlo could be called Blessed Carlo Acutis.”

The second miracle involved Valeria Valverde, a young student from Costa Rica who was studying in Florence.

While riding a bicycle, she was struck by a vehicle and thrown to the ground. As a result of the collision, she suffered a broken neck and was paralyzed. While she was in a hospital in Florence, her mother flew from Costa Rica and prayed in front of Blessed Carlo’s tomb. It was at that time that she received a call saying her daughter was moving her fingers and toes.

When her mother returned to the hospital, Valeria was sitting up in bed. However, in addition to the neck injury, she also sustained a lesion on her brain and was told not to travel.

“She went to Assisi anyway with her mom,” Cafiero said. “They prayed at the tomb of Carlo. She went back to Florence for testing, and the lesion was gone, so she was completely cured.”

As a result of this second miracle, Carlo was selected for canonization by Pope Francis. The canonization was scheduled for late April, but with Pope Francis’ passing on Easter Monday, it was delayed until Sunday, September 7.