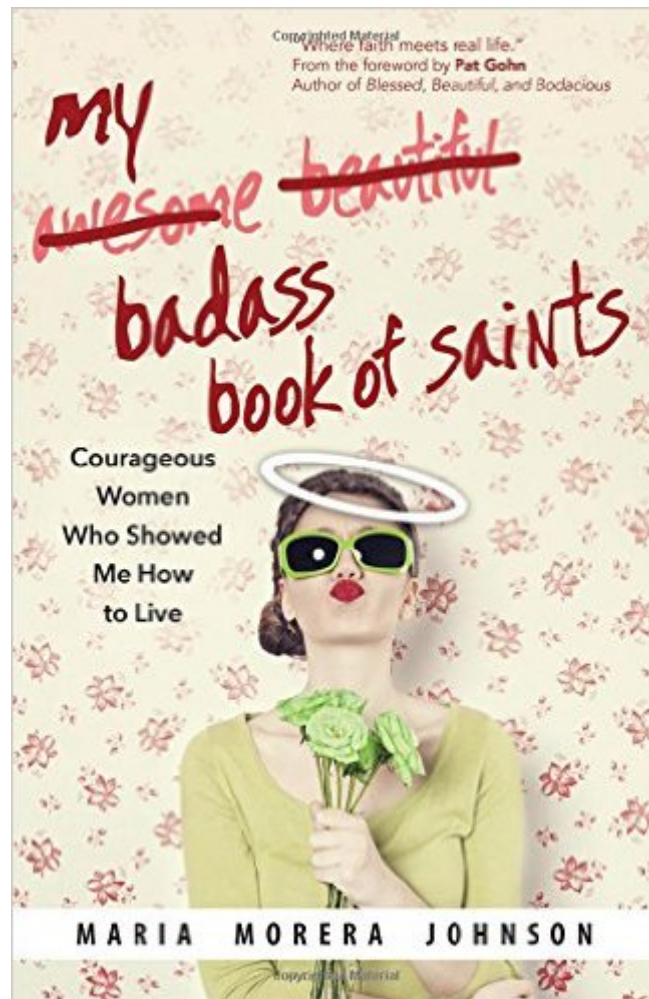


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# My Badass Book Of Saints: Courageous Women Who Showed Me How To Live



## Synopsis

Winner of a 2016 Association of Catholic Publishers Excellence in Publishing Award: Inspirational Books (First Place). In this edgy, honest, and often audacious book of Catholic spirituality, blogger and popular podcaster Maria Morera Johnson explores the qualities of twenty-four holy women who lived lives of virtue in unexpected and often difficult circumstances. In *My Badass Book of Saints*, Johnson shares her experience as a first-generation Cuban-American, educator of at-risk college students, and caregiver for a husband with Lou Gehrig's disease. Through humorous, empowering, and touching portraits of twenty-four spiritual mentors who inspired her, Johnson shows how their bravery, integrity, selflessness, perseverance, and hope helped her and can help others have courage to reach for a closer connection to God. She presents remarkable holy women and saints--including the gun-toting Servant of God Sr. Blandina Segale who tried to turn the heart of Billy the Kid, and Nazi resister Irena Sendler who helped smuggle children out of the Warsaw Ghetto during World War II--in a way that brings their vivid personalities to life and helps readers live out the challenges of their lives with virtue and conviction. The book includes a group discussion guide.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Maria Morera Johnson showed me how to coax the best of my badass self away from the shadows and into the light. She conveys new meaning to bringing out your feminine side. While this book was written from a capital C Catholic perspective, you don't have to be Catholic to savor the meaning and presentation of the book. *My badass book of saints*

provides a small catholic perspective to courageous living that shows it's OK to be less than perfect in striving to live a Christian life. While reading the different chapters, my responses ranged from tears to laughter. The tears came from examples of the absolute beauty of the heights the human spirit can achieve. The laughter came from the juxtaposition of the sacred and the slightly naughty. And yes, there is a saint of hangovers. There's also the image of a nun toting guns that brings on a quick twitch of the lips. Both the tears and laughter buoyed and cleansed my spirit by showing that even the saints weren't perfect. They didn't start out as saints, either. The author weaves the lives of extraordinary and ordinary women around a central theme of each chapter. The saints are, of course, extraordinary, but they all started out as ordinary girls who somehow rose to achieve amazing acts of courage and grace in very hostile circumstances. The author contrasts these lives with the lives of the ordinary or not-sainted women who also rose to confront grave conditions. Some of these women are the author's own ancestors and relatives. Others highlight minor historical figures. But each life—both extraordinary and ordinary—demonstrates the capacity to break through heartbreaking challenges to achieve spiritual peace. If they can do it, there's hope for the rest of us. Woven throughout the book, the author shares her own story. Like most of us, her life is a mixture of heartbreak and happiness with lots of ordinary times in between. Her story shows how the hard times and the blessings joined with humor to take her on a journey of deepening faith. The women in this book followed different paths and faced different trials, but all increased their faith by confronting their challenges. The courageous and the faithful can face their struggles knowing they are following God's will. But as the author says, holiness does not come from doing heroic deeds; rather, holiness comes from doing God's will perfectly. In the end, this book provides hope for the less than heroic and the less than perfect. Striving to do God's will is the best any of us can do—some just seem to have a knack for doing it better than the rest of us. God bless the saints and Maria Morera Johnson for writing this book.

My Badass Book of Saints is a terrific read. Part memoir, part book club guide, part devotional, and part hagiography, it all adds up to stories of bold, wonderful women that should inspire anyone. Johnson introduces us to Saints and women who she feels should be Saints all while giving us an intimate picture of her own life and asking questions that lead the reader to think deeply about their own inspirations and how to incorporate the lessons of some of these women into our own lives. Each chapter tells us a little of Johnson's own journey, but also gives us biographies of

two contrasting women. Imagine a comparison between Audrey Hepburn and St. Rose of Lima. Flannery O'Connor and St. Margaret of Antioch. Some of these pairings are astonishing especially when you realize just what some of these very different women had in common! As is the case with most books of Saints, many of the stories are more apocryphal than fact. However, that doesn't lessen the impact they have nor the astounding badassery of people you just would expect. I grew up with St. Theresa (the Little Flower) everywhere in my life. This is the first time I realized how very cool she really was. Now, I can't separate the memoir portion of the book (though I really read it for the hagiography). Johnson gives a story that's full of hope in spite of moments of heartbreak. You learn about her husband's illness, her father's death, and her mother's own badassery. While I'm not much on memoirs, it's interesting, compelling, and told in a style you can't help but like. An excellent and inspirational read! \*Review Copy provided by Netgalley.

The Saints are true models of how to live faith-filled lives. My Badass book of Saints brings their stories out of the clouds and shines a light on their true life stories. I have always liked reading about the saints but I loved the format of this book. First there is a personal story from the author, then a story from a contemporary cultural icon, then a tie-in with a saint story and a rap-up at the end to connect the three stories. This format makes the saints more approachable and relatable. Some of the saints included are: St. Joan of Arc, St. Teresa of Avila and St. Rose of Lima, just to name a few. Each chapter has a theme such as selflessness or perseverance and there are questions to ponder at the end of each chapter. This makes it perfect for discussion and group reading. I like how Maria Johnson teaches us how this all applies to our daily life with her quote "All of us are called to do our best. These ... don't inspire me to go out and look for opportunities to do good. Rather, they inspire me to keep a more watchful eye within my own circles of influence to see what needs to be done there, especially with my family, friends, and people with whom I interact." I know I can often be looking for a project in the community at large, instead of looking inside my life already for opportunities to do good. I would recommend this book to you as a fun way to get to know some remarkable women to inspire you. I liked being challenged to think of women in our own lives that are courageous and compassionate as some of the themes and questions suggest. The title is great and I love the description of badass women we can not just imitate but find their qualities in ourselves already, waiting to be tapped into to bring more to our lives and those around us.

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