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WHO'S IN HEAVEN NOW: FRASSATI, ACUTIS, PAUL VI?

In today's (Latin) decree of canonization of Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis, Pope Leo IV used the phrase "decernimus et definimus." The provided English translation was "we declare and define" that they are saints.

(The "we" here is the royal "we," which should be read as a singular and not a plural: no people other than the pope were included in "we"; this formal usage implies the speaker is thinking in terms of himself-plus-his-high-office as a unit.)

Was this phrasing, "we declare and define," an exercise in papal infallibility? The "declare and define" formula is what is found in papal decrees that commonly are considered infallible, such as the declarations of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. That would suggest that, indeed, Frassati and Acutis are now, absolutely-positively, saints, with no room left for wondering.

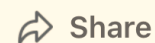
But in recent years there has been a movement, among some self-described Traditionalists, to say that canonizations are not, and never really have been (or at least often have not been), infallible declarations.

I'm unaware of such claims arising from any quarter until several recent popes disliked (mildly to severely) by these Traditionalists were canonized, including John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II. Usually Paul VI receives the most opprobrium. These opponents of these popes think the popes flubbed things so badly that, at the least, they should not be given standard saintly honors, even if in fact they are in heaven--which they supposedly may or may not be yet.

I wonder what the "take" of these people is regarding today's two new saints. Will they acknowledge them as resident in heaven, or, to be consistent with their arguments regarding those three popes, will they say that Frassati and Acutis perhaps aren't actually in heaven yet?

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ITS EDITORS LEFT NO STONE turned in their quest for the best versions of these ancient Catholic hymns, combing through centuries of English translations from the sixteenth century to the present day. In the process, they have revealed much little-known material, and some that is published in a hymnal for the first time. [They] navigate this difficult terrain with assurance; indeed, the editors' explanation of the Urbanite reform and its impact on English translators is a model of clarity, and contains information this reviewer has not encountered elsewhere.

—Dr. Aaron James: 2019 review of the *Brébeuf Catholic Hymnal* in the *Journal of the Society for Catholic Liturgy* • <https://ocwatershed.org/hymn/>