

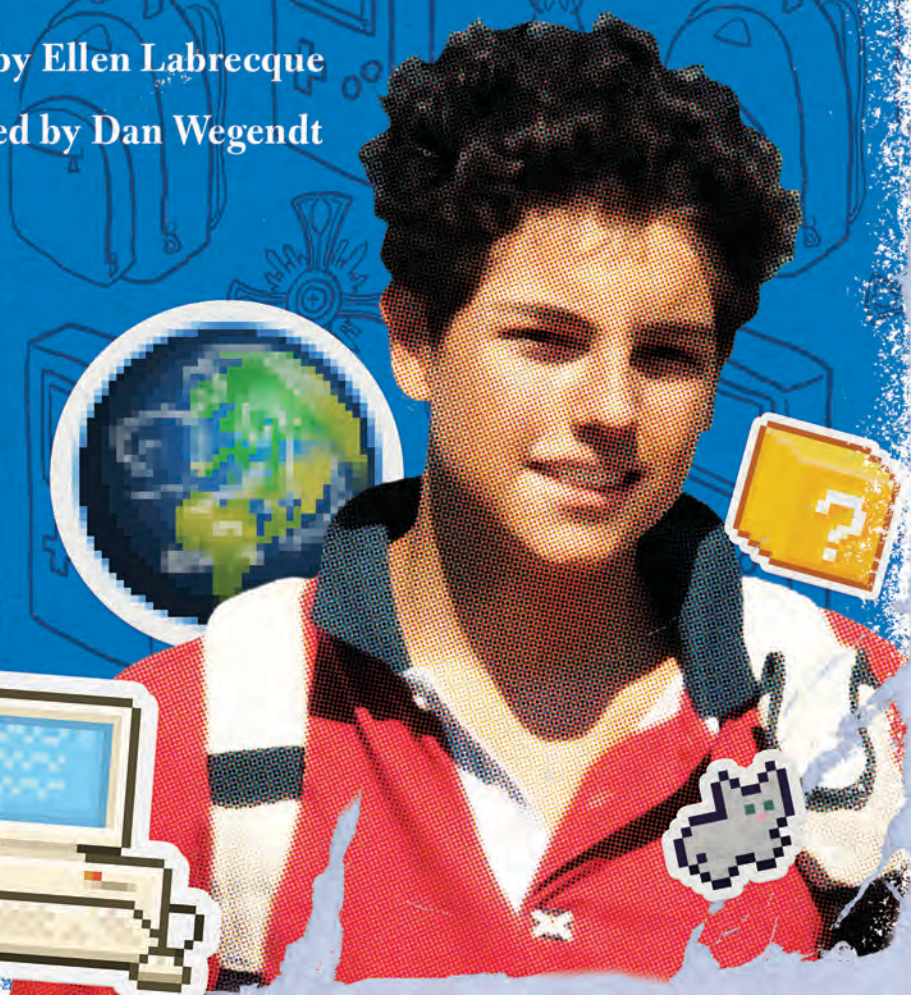
you  
CAN  
BE A  
Saint

# CARLO ACUTIS

GOD'S COMPUTER GENIUS

Written by Ellen Labrecque

Illustrated by Dan Wegendt





**CARLO ACUTIS**





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## God's Computer Genius

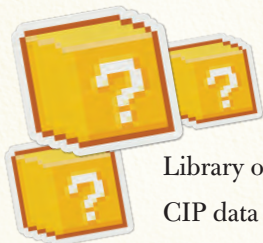
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BOOKS & MEDIA  
Boston





Library of Congress Control Number: 2021938258

CIP data is available.

ISBN 10: 0-8198-1700-7

ISBN 13: 978-0-8198-1700-6

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*A Prayer to Blessed Carlo Acutis* contributed by Sr. Allison Gliot

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Published by Pauline Books & Media, 50 Saint Pauls Avenue, Boston, MA 02130-3491

Printed in the U.S.A.

CAGCG VSAUSAPEOILL7-110182 1700-7

[www.pauline.org](http://www.pauline.org)

Pauline Books & Media is the publishing house of the Daughters of St. Paul, an international congregation of women religious serving the Church with the communications media.

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## PROLOGUE

# Blessed Carlo

It is a lovely fall day at the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, Italy. Carlo Acutis is set to be beatified by the Catholic Church. Carlo died of leukemia—a type of cancer—in 2006 at the age of fifteen. This ceremony on October 10, 2020, is the second-to-last step on the path to sainthood. Carlo could become the first millennial to become a saint in the Church. A millennial is anybody who was born between the years 1981 and 1996. The Catholic Church has declared more than ten thousand people saints, but only a small fraction of them died as children or teenagers. Carlo is special—even among the blessed.

Cardinal Agostino Vallini is presiding over the Mass for Carlo. The Cardinal is a member of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. This is the group that oversees the process and steps of sainthood. Over three thousand people are in Assisi for the ceremony. In addition to the people in the church, people across the city can watch the Mass on screens that have been set up. Carlo's body is laid in a coffin in the church. He is



dressed in a track jacket, his favorite pair of jeans, and a pair of Nike sneakers.



The next day, Pope Francis, the leader of the Catholic Church, shares how much he admires this young man. “[Carlo] shows today’s young people that true happiness is found by putting God first and also by serving our brothers [and sisters], especially the least,”<sup>1</sup> the Pope says.



Carlo Acutis worked to help the poor and always looked out for people in need. But he was also a typical teenager who loved to play video games, write in his journal, hang out with friends, walk his dogs, and use his cellphone. Carlo was a computer wiz who built websites, wrote computer programs, and created graphic and video design.

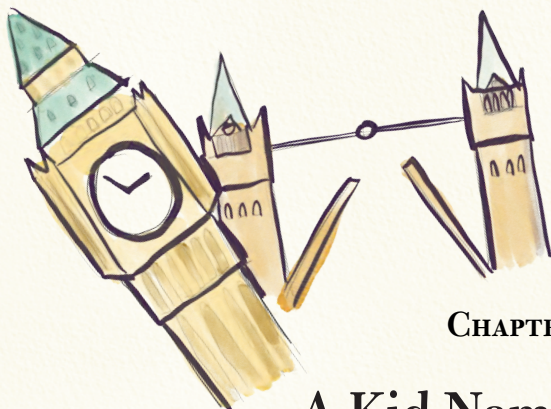
Carlo didn’t just do these things for fun. He used his computer skills as a force for holiness. He brought God and faith to people by using the Internet.

“Carlo was the light answer to the dark side of the web,” said Carlo’s mother, Antonia. “My son’s life can show how the Internet can be used for good—to spread good things.”<sup>2</sup>

So why is this exceptional modern teenager on the path to sainthood? This is Carlo’s journey.







## CHAPTER 1

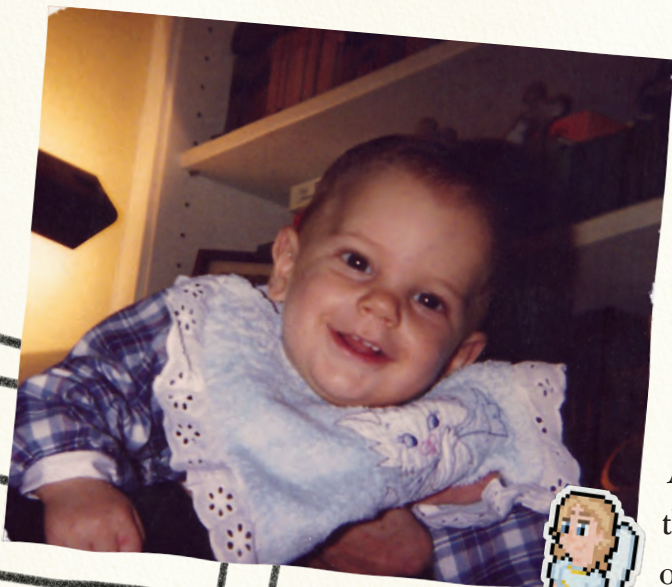
# A Kid Named Carlo

Carlo Acutis was born on May 3, 1991, in London, England. Both his parents, though, were Italian. His mother was Antonia Salzano Acutis and his father was Andrea Acutis. The family lived in England because Andrea was temporarily working there in business.

Carlo was Antonia and Andrea's first child. Their son was baptized on May 18, just fifteen days after he was born. He was baptized by Father Nicholas Martin in Our Lady of Dolours Church in London. A couple months after the Baptism, Carlo's family moved back to their home city and country, Milan, Italy.







Carlo's mother and father were both Catholic. But they were not devout. This means they didn't go to weekly Mass and they didn't pray daily. In fact, on the day her son was born, Antonia had only been to church three times in her life. She went on the day of her own Baptism, on the day of her Confirmation, and on the day of her wedding. Still, when the family moved back to Italy, they joined the Santa Maria Segreta Parish in

## Italy

Italy is a country in Europe that is shaped like a boot. It is one of the most Catholic countries in Europe. Over 78 percent of people there identify themselves as this religion. The capital and largest city in Italy is Rome. Inside of Rome is Vatican City. Vatican City is the smallest country in the world. It is the home of the pope and the headquarters of the Catholic Church.





Milan. They became members of the parish, even if they did not plan on attending Mass. Being Catholic was their identity as much as their religious belief.

Carlo had a nanny named Beata. She helped care for Carlo. Beata was from Poland and was very religious. She would share some of her beliefs with Carlo while she cared for him. “Beata was one of the first people to speak to Carlo about God,”<sup>3</sup> Antonia said.

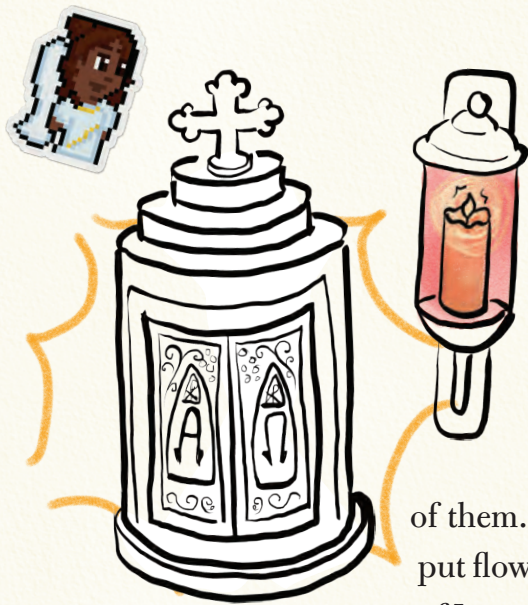
Carlo was a beautiful baby and grew into a handsome little boy. He had deep, soulful brown eyes and a shock of curly brown hair. He also had a bright smile that made everybody around him smile too.



Milan is also an important city in Italy. It is known as Italy's financial headquarters. It is famous for its high fashion and artwork. It is the home of one of the world's most famous paintings—The Last Supper—by Leonardo da Vinci. Da Vinci created this piece between 1495 and 1498. The painting portrays Jesus and his twelve apostles at a long table. It shows Jesus' final meal with his followers before he is crucified.







By the age of three, Carlo loved visiting churches. He could not walk past a church without asking his mother if they could go inside and greet Jesus. This was new to Carlo's mother, but she took her son anyway. Italy has more than one hundred thousand Catholic churches, and Milan is home to a lot of them. When Carlo visited each church, he liked to put flowers in front of the statues of Mary. The mother of Jesus had a special place in his young heart.

"I was perplexed by his devotion," said his mom, Antonia. "He was so small and so sure."

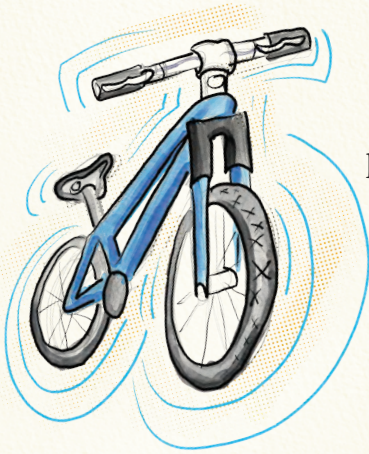
Since Antonia wasn't religious, she couldn't believe she had a son who was so touched by God. She wasn't even sure she had the tools to help foster this holiness in her son. She soon realized she was going to have to let Carlo show her his way.

When Carlo was six, he attended the primary school at the Institute of Marcelline Sisters in Piazza Tommaseo. It was a Catholic school run by nuns. Carlo was very smart and did well, although sometimes he chatted and joked with friends when he should have been listening to the teacher. After school, Carlo played football (American soccer).

He also rode his bike, watched action films, and learned how to play the saxophone.







Carlo was popular and had plenty of buddies. Everybody liked him. He had a kind and calm way about him. He always stood up for and defended kids with disabilities who were being bullied. When a friend's parents were going through a divorce, Carlo invited the boy back to his house to spend time with his family. He understood as a young kid that spending time with people is the most important thing a friend can do.

Carlo's best friend was not a student at his school, though. He considered his guardian

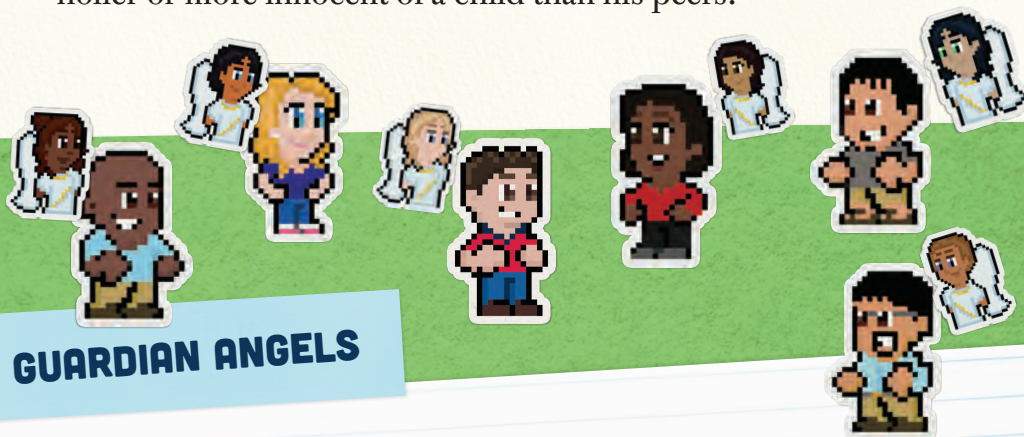




angel as his best friend. Catholics believe that everybody has been given a guardian angel from God. The guardian angel guides and protects each person. Carlo prayed to his guardian angel every day.

Teachers and other adults saw Carlo as unique, or different from other boys his age. They would often say to Carlo's mom, "Madame, your son is special!" But the principal of Carlo's grade school, Sister Miranda, thought he blended in well with his classmates.

"I can say that the greatest miracle I saw in Carlo is that he looked like everyone else," she explained, "without making me think he was holier or more innocent of a child than his peers."<sup>4</sup>



## GUARDIAN ANGELS

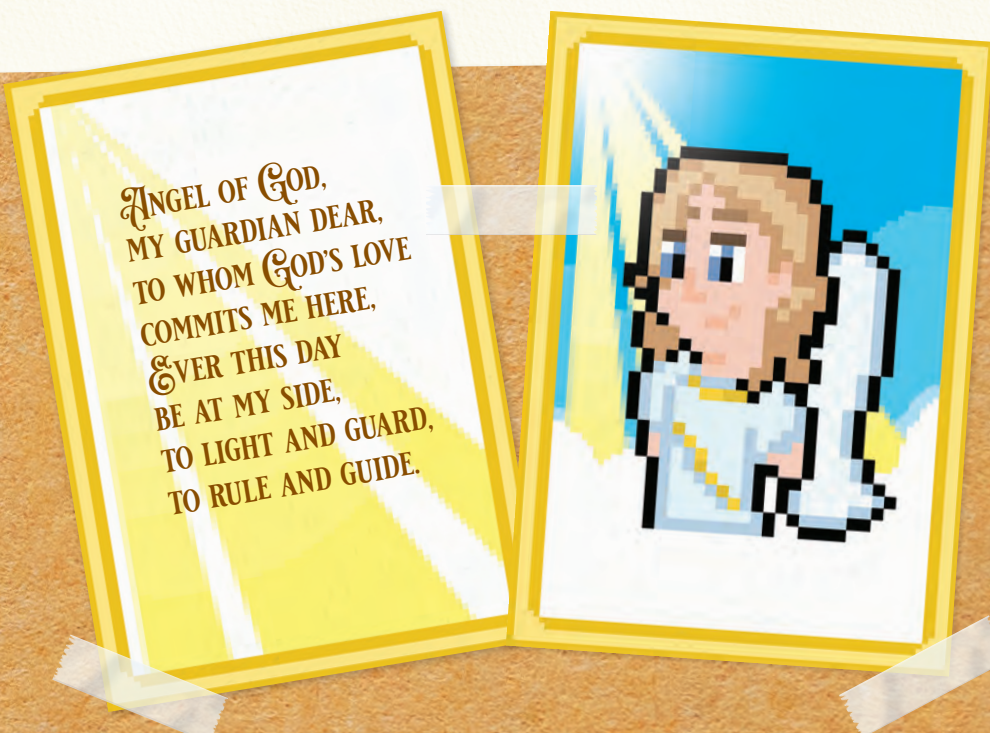
Angels are intelligent spiritual beings created by God. Guardian angels are given to each person by God. A guardian angel's job is to protect, lead, and pray for us. A guardian angel shepherds us through life, helping to lead us to eternal life. We may pray to our guardian angel for help whenever we want to.



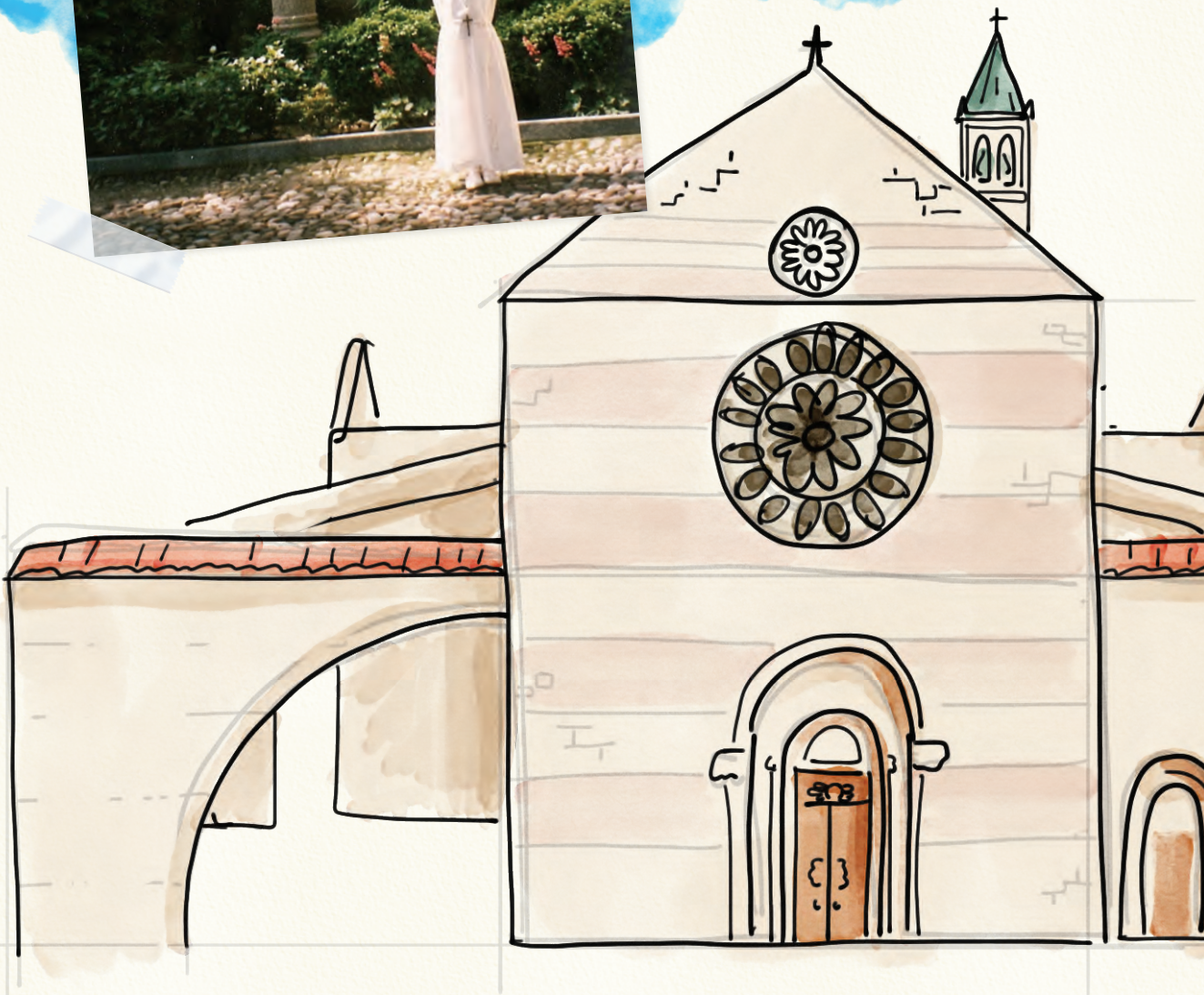


On June 16, 1998, Carlo, age seven, made his first Holy Communion. This was two years earlier than most other kids in Italy received this sacrament. But Carlo was so excited to receive the Eucharist that his family had asked and was given special permission by their church for him to receive this sacrament early. He did not celebrate this milestone with a party, though. Instead,

dressed in a long white robe and white shoes, Carlo received









Communion in a monastery of cloistered sisters. A monastery is a place for silence and reflection. Cloistered nuns spend their days in prayer and physical work. They remain apart from the world so that they can be totally dedicated to God and pray for the needs of everyone. Having Carlo's first Communion at such a holy place made it even more special. Over the entrance to the monastery, the words were written, "God is enough."

