

Why do Catholics worship statues? People still ask that question; probably because we have so many statues in our churches and in our homes. But no, we are not idolaters because we have images of Christ and the saints in the form of statues – so no, we don't worship statues. Our statue of St. Patrick in the narthex of our church is simply, and only, a piece of art that brings to mind the stories of St. Patrick. The family photos we have of those who have died are so precious because they bring us right back to specific events that we shared with them like: Thanksgiving, Christmas, or birthdays. Sometimes when we look back on those photos we can almost smell food and hear the laughter, and see in our mind's eye all the other details the camera could not capture. Statues of Christ, our Blessed Mother and the saints, are meant to bring us to a deeper, more personal level of relationship with some of the people from our Catholic tradition. For example, who can look at Michelangelo's Pieta and not be moved? Seeing that statue of the crucified Christ in his mother's arms brings us right to a specific moment in history and stirs up feelings of grief and remorse and a whole range of emotions. For centuries art in all its forms has helped to shape and focus our religious imagination, to tell stories from our tradition, and to help educate the faithful. Furthermore for centuries statues have been used to honor people who have made significant contributions to society. Our statues of the saints do indeed honor them as well, but their significance runs deeper than accolades, they remind us of how ordinary people, who surrender to the grace of God can impact the Church in ways that will never be forgotten.