As exemplars of practice and transmitters of doctrine, the sages of Confucianism possess a family resemblance to the saints of Christianity. In order to call attention to the unique characteristics of Confucianism as a religion, this lecture compares Confucian rites of enshrinement with the canonization of saints in Catholicism. To this end, four aspects of sagehood and sainthood are examined from four different perspectives, namely the rites involved in the recommendation of suitable candidates; the standards and qualifications for sagehood and sainthood; an analysis of beliefs from the viewpoint of social class; and the content of those beliefs. In the early 20th century, the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) carried out research on the correlation between Confucian beliefs and membership of certain social classes. However, many of Confucianism’s characteristics as a state cult and a public religion are yet to be explored. In order to shed light on those characteristics, this article delivers a cross-cultural comparison of Confucian and Christian rites. In sum, significant differences existed between contemporary Confucianism and Christianity, the former being a state cult and civic religion, the latter a private religion responsive to the well-being and misfortunes of its individual believers. Those differences may account for the inability of modern Chinese intellectuals, who are immersed in the model of private religion, to grasp the religious nature of Confucianism.