

WHO ARE THE SAINTS IN YOUR LIFE?

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This All Saints has come upon me with more than the usual power. I am fairly sure that this is because this is the second year in a row where I am reading the names of not one but two family members in the necrology, the list of those who have died in the past year. Both my sister and I are dealing with the estates of two different family members simultaneously. My family has lost 4 parents in 20 months so yes death has been much on my mind. I find All Saints a grace filled opportunity to remember them and to move through my own personal grief.

All Saints Day, the midpoint of one of those three day religious festivals that we have. All Hallows Eve October 31, All Saints on November 1 and All Souls on November 2. This celebration traces back to 373 CE and was established on November 1 by Pope Gregory IV in 844. Some of the customs date back to pagan Celtic traditions that were adapted into the church celebration, which is something that happened quite frequently in the church. This is a celebration of the saints of the church and of all the faithful departed.

The Communion of Saints: what is it? According to the Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church it is spiritual union existing between Christ and all believers living and dead. There are times when I stand at this altar and am aware of this presence. I know one mystic who tells of watching a priest standing at an altar in an old cathedral and seeing what looked like a long line of priests standing near him as he celebrated. Once before I was ordained I was setting the altar (yes I was on altar guild) for an All Saints service at the parish that sponsored me and being aware of the footprints that were worn in the marble floor from all who had stood there before me.

Br. David Vryhof: “(On All Saints) we recall that we are in the presence of all the saints, those men and women and children who have gone before us in the faith, who have shown us the way by their words and their actions. The Christian faith affirms that for these followers of Christ, “life is changed not ended” and that they continue to be present to us in the “communion of saints.” Having finished the race they were given to run, they are now praying for us, supporting us, and cheering us on as we run the race that has been set before each one of us.”

-Br. David Vryhof [Society of Saint John the Evangelist](#)

Take a moment to consider the “saints” in your life and the life of this parish. Now many saints in this sense are not necessarily the nicest people, the friendliest or the easiest to get along with. Saints are often those people who challenge us to

be more than we are. They challenge us to take a hard look at ourselves, in short they are truth tellers even when we may not want to hear the truth. So who are the saints in your life both those living and those who have died?

- Who do you know who has turned to God when their life was falling apart around them? Who are the people who know their dependence on God alone and were an example of faith in God for you
- Who do you know who has lost something or someone close to them and kept their faith in God. Who are the people who have trusted God to provide for them in their time of sorrow and mourning
- Who do you know that was or is content with who they are. Who realizes that they are loved by God, just as they are? People who are able to reach out in love to others, knowing that they are loved by God. The person in your life who is “peace filled”.
- Who do you know who works for justice? As our Baptismal Covenant says, “will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?”
- Who do you know who attempts to see Christ in others? Who are the people who see the best in others and helps you to see the beauty in the world around you?
- Who are the people in your life who are peacemakers, who promote acts of reconciliation in the world?
- Who do you know who has striven for justice and peace among people, in Jesus Name, and experienced persecution in their daily life. Who do you know who has stood up for what they believed in and been ostracized. Or maybe even something simple such as attending worship, instead of a sports event on a Sunday morning?

So who is a saint that you can name. Not a big famous saint, but one from your personal experience. Turn to the person next to you and tell them something about this person.

(Pause for discussion)

As our Stewardship Campaign reminds us that God is the giver, God gives us saints in our lives, but we need to remember to thank God express our gratitude to God for the saints that God has given us. Take a moment and write down that name and bring it forward. As you place that name in the basin feel free to say the name out loud.

We are in good company with the prophets and Christians who have gone before us. Saints are really just normal people, but people who choose a different path than many. They have their flaws, quirks and weaknesses, but they constantly sought and seek to walk the path that Christ laid out. As Christians we follow those who have come before us and lived the message of service to God. We are called to put our feet on the same path that Christ offers us. AMEN.

