

All Saints Sunday

Intro. Put your books away. There is a short trivia test today. First: name two Saints from our Catholic tradition. Next: name two good people from your neighborhood, school or work. For the bonus: name two holy people from your *family* tradition. That should not be difficult. Some saints are well-known because they gave their lives for the Lord or for being a leader in a time of trouble. The vast majority of saints live quietly in our towns, neighborhoods and families. They are leaders in communities and sometimes of nations. Their quiet example and faith encourages us every day.

I. From its beginning, our Christian Catholic tradition made sure it remembers the people whose example of faith was vital to our survival. Scripture

is full of examples of leaders like Moses, Esther, David, Ruth, John the Baptist and Mary. Scripture also mentions the Samaritan woman at the well, the man born blind and the women who followed the Lord to Calvary; unfortunately none of whose names we know today. The Beatitudes were the Lord's mission statement at the beginning of his ministry. It was his clear goal that he was going to raise people's expectations by turning upside down their usual way of understanding life. These blessings are characteristics of holiness that are as true today as they were the day the Lord spoke them on the mountain. These characteristics "can be practiced by anybody, religious or lay, Catholic or Protestant, even Christian or non-Christian. [*Living Liturgy, 2020*, Liturgical Press, p. 240] Division and strife make it difficult to live up to the challenge of

holiness, but it can be done. Hard times often draw out people to respond with acts of courage and bravery who otherwise prefer to live quietly.

Concl. Every generation has people who lived their faith, whether easy or difficult. They were inspired by others and continue to inspire *us* in our own generation. From Augustine in Africa to Peter Claver in Columbia. Teresia Benedicta and Maximillian Kolbe in World War II Nazi concentration camps; Mothers Teresa in the slums of India, Elizabeth Seton and Katherine Drexel in the U.S.; Popes John XXIII and John Paul II; Bishop Romero in Salvador; many good lay women and men still being killed in every part of the world; and as of Friday, Blessed Fr. McGivney, who founded the Knights of Columbus in the 1880s, to offer financial help to struggling Catholic families. The

list is large but not yet complete. We do not pretend to be saints, but depending on how we respond to our own challenges, we might be remembered by our families for our faith. Or even by the whole church.
Holiness is not out of reach for any of us. But it through discipline in faith, prayer and action.
Saints of God, pray for us.

Fr. Michael Pendergraft

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