



Bringing Home the Word

Solemnity of All Saints (A)
November 1, 2020

We Are All Called to Sainthood

By Mary Katharine Deeley

I didn't have a calendar for a long time and prided myself on keeping my schedule and my children's schedule in my head. Then came the week I missed three appointments and realized I could no longer rely on my memory. Now I live by my calendar. Appointments, meetings, and to-do lists are neatly in their appropriate slots, and the calendar is the first thing I look at in the morning and the last thing I see before I leave the office. There isn't a lot of time for anything else. This begs the question: When does being a saint get space in my day?

Sunday Readings

Revelation 7:2-4, 9-14

These are the ones who have survived the time of great distress.

1 John 3:1-3

Everyone who has this hope based on him makes himself pure, as he is pure.

Matthew 5:1-12a

[Jesus said,] "Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven."

Saints are so transparent to God that God's grace simply flows through them. And we are all called to sainthood, to holiness, regardless of what we do or who we are in the world. We have the mistaken notion that the saints spent all their time doing religious or spiritual things and that if their schedules were like ours, there would be fewer of them. We couldn't be further from the truth. Saint Paul—when he wasn't planting churches, writing letters, or preaching the Good News—was spending more than a little time in prison. I don't think sainthood was really on his to-do list. Nor did he schedule being holy in between travels. His sainthood came from hearing the voice of God, obeying it, and incorporating it into whatever he was doing.

Shoehorning prayer and study into our schedules may be just what we need, and we must allow God to help us find and become the saint in the midst of each of our lives. +

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A Word from Pope Francis

Christians are called to promote political dialogue, especially where it is threatened and where conflict seems to prevail. Christians are called to restore dignity to politics and to view politics as a lofty service to the common good, not a platform for power... To be a leader demands thoughtfulness, training, and experience.

—Address to Bishops' Conferences of the European Community, October 28, 2017



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Who are your favorite saints and why?
- How can you put more prayer, religious study, and holiness into your schedule?

Want to Be in That Number?

By Kathleen M. Basi

When I was a child, I had a book about saints that I loved. It was filled with color pictures and heroic, larger-than-life stories. I spent hours trying to decide whether I liked Catherine of Siena better for cutting her hair off and being a nun and all, but Alexandria's picture was prettier.

It was years before I realized most of these people weren't the golden-haired northern Europeans portrayed in my book. It was later still before I realized that by focusing on legends and miracles, I had turned sainthood into something reserved for a select few—something far beyond the reach of an ordinary mortal like me.

These days, I prefer to think of the saints as real people, flawed and fragile, representing every country and culture on earth. Yet for all their diversity, each of them sought exactly what I seek: discernment and courage to walk in the footsteps of Christ in a way that is authentic both to his example and to the time and place in which I live.

Now, my favorite stories speak not of miracles, but of extraordinary courage in ordinary situations—like Elizabeth Ann Seton, who, as an impoverished widow, founded the first parochial school in this country, along with a new order of religious—all while raising her own children.

They speak of deeply practical courage in extraordinary circumstances—like Maximilian Kolbe, who willingly



starved to death in place of a fellow concentration-camp prisoner in Auschwitz. In my opinion, that would be even harder than volunteering for a firing squad, where at least the end would come quickly.

And then there are figures with checkered pasts, like Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton—those who don't have feast days in the Church calendar but whose words and actions have reverberated like an earthquake, reshaping the foundation of my faith.

Real people. Real lives. People stumbling through their world in all its messiness, trying to find the path to holiness amid chaos and to identify their individual purpose for why God placed

them on this earth. Those people give me hope. If they managed to find their purpose, maybe I can, too.

Saints are real people with real lives seeking the discernment and courage to exemplify Christ.

It's no longer enough for me to read a paragraph or two about the legendary exploits of those whose names begin with "Saint." I want to know how the real people behind those legends lived. How they learned to mirror God while surrounded by cranky kids and clueless coworkers and spouses who insist on using dish towels to wipe dirty mouths. Because that is the path I need illuminated. +

PRAYER

Lord, I am grateful for your life of humble service. Give me a humble, willing heart to serve the needs of your people.

—From *Grateful Meditations for Every Day in Ordinary Time*, Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 2–7

Monday, All Souls' Day:
Wis 3:1–9 / Rom 5:5–11 / Jn 6:37–40

Tuesday, Weekday:
Phil 2:5–11 / Lk 14:15–24

Wednesday, St. Charles Borromeo:
Phil 2:12–18 / Lk 14:25–33

Thursday, Weekday:
Phil 3:3–8a / Lk 15:1–10

Friday, Weekday:
Phil 3:17–4:1 / Lk 16:1–8

Saturday, Weekday:
Phil 4:10–19 / Lk 16:9–15

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