

Homily for the Feast of All Saints

November 1, 2018

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A VERY HAPPY FEAST DAY!

“Who are these wearing white robes and where did they come from?” (*Rev 7:13*)

A few years ago the response might have been: They are Dominicans, and they come from Prouille; Regensburg, New York; and finally, Adrian. As we walk our beautiful cemetery and reflect on the women who have preceded us and on whose shoulders we stand, most of us would say, “Yes, this is their day!” Happy Feast Day!

We look at those canonized this past month and ask: “Who are these and where did they come from?” We see the Church recognizing another dimension of being saintly: seven women and men; lay and ordained, from youth to elder, from different countries, and as Pope Francis said: seven different ways of responding to God’s call, two of whom had name recognition: Paul VI and Oscar Romero. Actually, they were saints, weren’t they, before officially named as such?

The one thing those seven and our Sisters all had in common was *deep love of God and God’s people and creation*. As we listen to the stories at each wake service, isn’t that what stands out? Deep love for God and God’s people and creation! And out of that love, many were able to accomplish wondrous things. On the other hand, we have those like my sister, Sister Marya, who from age 25 to 43 was unable to DO much of anything because of illness, but she loved her God and loved God’s people, and trusted that because of that love, her life and her suffering had meaning.

The second thing they all had in common was that *they were not perfect!* They were fabulous as children of God, uniquely graced and gifted, and each of them was flawed! I love the description of saintliness given by our Pope John XXIII: “*Saintliness results from learning the art of self-giving love. It flows from dying to self, from laughing at one’s own foibles and humbly enduring the foibles of others. Saints aren’t so much superstars of holiness as humble sinners, ready to allow God to love them just as they are.*”

Can you think of someone who hasn’t been publicly acknowledged as a saint, but you experienced the person as a humble sinner, someone who allowed God to love him or her just as they were, and then shared that love so generously with others? A Christ love that expressed itself in a BE-attitude; such as be-ing gentle or merciful or willing to mourn with those who suffer; be-ing a peace maker, or one who hungered for justice. In other words, be-ing a sacrament of God’s Love for others. Let’s put the word saint in front of their names and give them public recognition. I’ll start with my mother and sister: St. Marge; St. Marya ...

Halloween is behind us. No need for a mask today. In fact, the truth of our identity might be even scarier for some. A humble sinner, ready to allow God to love you, just as you are; fabulous as a child of God, and, yes, flawed! And, in gratitude to God for such gift of love, one longs to be a loving presence for others. If this is true for you, try saying your name to yourself with the title “saint.” It might seem a bit uncomfortable at first, but let its truth, by the grace of God, roll around in your mouth; savor it, and bring this gift to the altar in thanksgiving to the Holy One. Happy Feast Day!