

FROM THE CHAPLAINCY



Dear Woodrose Parents

The newsletter for November last school year was on Prayers for the Dead. It was a most appropriate topic for the month dedicated to offering prayers for the faithful departed. Most of us visited our departed relatives and friends by going to the cemetery early this month. For our newsletter this

time, we thought of sharing with you this short yet insightful article written by one of our favorite spiritual writers, Fr. Ed Broom. We hope that by reading and reflecting on this article, you will be inspired to live your daily life with your eyes fixed on our true home, heaven.

Church Triumphant: 10 Insights Into the Saints

FR. ED BROOM, OMV

Every year the Church joyfully celebrates the Feast of All Saints. A classical ecclesiastical model divides the Church into three parts, but all belonging to the same family of God: the Church Triumphant, the saints in heaven, the Church Militant, those living soldiers on earth, fighting for their salvation, and finally, the Church Suffering—the souls in Purgatory, already saints but in need of purification to attain Heaven.

This article will focus on the Church Triumphant—the saints in heaven who have victoriously triumphed over their three primary enemies—the devil and his lies, the world and its seductions, and the flesh and its imperious disordered cravings! Following are ten precise insights into the most captivating, heroic, appealing, joyful, tremendous people that walked on planet earth and now are permanent residents in heaven—God’s friends, but also your friends and mine—the saints!

1. Saints Are Not Born Saints

A somewhat prevalent error is to believe that the saints were actually born saints. Nothing could be further from the truth. All saints are conceived and born with Original Sin, with tendencies or inclinations that they must overcome and dominate relying on their own efforts but especially the grace of God.

Actually quite a few of the great saints had lived very sinful past lives before their conversion, to name a few: the Good thief, Mary Magdalene, St. Augustine, St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Mary of Egypt, and St. Margaret of Cortona—known as the “Second Magdalene”.

2. You Are Called to Be a Saint

Often when teaching Confirmation I will ask how many of them want to become saints. More often than not, nobody will raise their hands. Then I ask them how many want to avoid hell and go to heaven and then all hands go up. Then I go on to explain that in heaven we have the Triune-God (The Blessed Trinity), The Blessed Virgin Mary, the angels and the saints. So, for you to go to heaven you have to become a saint!



3. Jesus Commands Us to Be Saints

Listen to the words of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is our model and especially in holiness of life: “Be holy as your heavenly Father is holy.”(Mt. 5:48) Grammatically, the tense is imperative, which means that this is a command from God Himself.

If God commands us to do something then He will give us the sufficient grace to carry it out! God never commands the impossible, but always gives us sufficient grace. Jesus said to Saint Paul: “My grace is sufficient for you.”

Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta expressed this truth succinctly: “Sanctity is not the privilege of the few, but the duty of all.” The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, chapter V is “The universal call to holiness.” This is a must read for all who truly desire to become saints—check it out!

4. Saints Come From All Over

Sanctity is not limited to one time, place, culture or ethnic group. Sanctity is open to all; rather, sanctity is commanded by Jesus for all.

Leaf through an anthology of saints and you will find the most diverse backgrounds and experiences. Some are nuns; others are priests, Bishops or Pope. Still others are married couples, like in the case of the parents of St. Therese of Lisieux — Saints Louis and Zelig Martin. Still others have embraced the single lay vocation like Giuseppe Moscati and Blessed Giorgio Frascati.

Some have died very young — like Dominic Savio (14) and Maria Goretti (11) years of age. Then there are those who have lived long lives— Saint Alphonsus lived into his nineties; Saint Anthony of the desert as well as St. John the Evangelist lived into their hundreds. Some died of sickness and many died as martyrs.



Therefore sanctity cuts across and transcends time, place, culture, gender, intellectual formation or lack of it. All are called to become saints and all are given the grace!

5. Church Triumphant

The saints can be classified as being in the Church Triumphant. They have fought the good fight and they have run the good race and now they are in heaven crowned by God victoriously for having conquered sin in their lives and for having relied and trusted in God’s infinite grace and his fathomless mercy. Jesus said to Saint Faustina that the worst of all sinners can be the greatest saints if they simply trust in God’s infinite mercy.

We celebrate their feast day every year November 1st—The Solemnity of All Saints!

6. The Saints & Their Help to Us

The saints can help us in many ways. However, two aspects of their presence can help us beyond measure. First, is their power of intercession. The saints can intercede for us before the throne of God and attain from God for us necessary graces to help us to avoid sin and practice virtue so that we can

arrive at where they are now—the Kingdom of Heaven, the House of the Eternal Father. Second, the saints leave us from their lives a powerful example that we are challenged to imitate in our own lives. Holy examples have an appeal and attraction that draws us almost like a magnetic pull! How often have saints been inspired by saints that lived before them to follow on the demanding pathway of holiness? A perfect example is Saint Ignatius of Loyola who while recovering from being shot in the legs by a cannon ball in the Battle of Pamplona started to read the lives of the saints. He broke out in an enthusiastic cry: “If Francis can do it, so can I!” Then, “If Dominic can do it then so can I.” Saint Ignatius of Loyola was inspired to become a great saint by reading of the these holy men and women of God who lived before him.

7. Read the Lives of the Saints

It can be an enormous stimulus and motivation for all of us to read the lives of the saints. This will fuel our engines and give us abundant food for thought on the path we must undertake to arrive at heroic virtue and holiness and to become the saints that God is calling us to be!

Why not buy a book on the life of a saint that appeals to you or a text that has a short summary of various lives of the saints and read a few minutes every night before retiring for the night?

8. Qualities of Saints

When the Holy Father officially canonizes a saint, after the required miracles, the Pope is stating that this person practiced heroic virtue. Despite Original sin and possibly a sinful past, the saint has decided to give up sin and fight against it. But more importantly, the saint has decided, with the help of God’s grace, to practice virtue, better yet heroic virtue.

This means that he practices virtue in his daily life constantly; not by fits and starts or only when he feels like it. No! There is a constant living out of heroic virtue, the practice of virtues that reflect sanctity of life.

9. Joy & the Saints

One of the most evident signs of the presence of God in our lives is that of *joy*. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Philippians, exhorts us with these words: “Rejoice in the Lord, I tell you again: rejoice in the Lord.” (Phil 4:4)

The saints are filled with the Holy Spirit and are overflowing and effusive of joy. Joy is one of the most clear and evident fruits of the Holy Spirit active and operative in the lives of the saints.

10. Our Lady, Queen of All the Saints

Our Lady is the Queen of all of the saints. Our Lady is the most holy and the greatest of the saints. It is very difficult to find any saint that did not have a tender, loving, fervent and ardent love and devotion to Our Lady. Her prayers and example have motivated many men and women to pursue the path of holiness. For that reason we call out: “Holy Mary Mother of God pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

May Our Lady’s prayers encourage you to become a great saint, starting right now!