

Father Brad Neely

Spps: Nezperce: Nov 01, 2010 All Saints

Rev 7: 2-4, 9-14; 1Jn 3: 1-3; Mt 5: 1-12

Today, we honor the saints of the Catholic Church.

The CCC describes a saint

as a "holy one"

who leads a life in union with God

through the grace of Christ

and receives the reward of eternal life.

In fact, the Church

is called the *communion of saints*,

a union, or communion, of these holy ones.”

Each time the Eucharist Prayer is prayed at Mass,

we call the saints to mind.

One example:

[Heavenly Father]---

“ . . . make us worthy to share eternal life with Mary,
the virgin mother of God,
with the apostles, and with all the *saints*,
who have done your will throughout the ages.
May we praise you in union with them,
and give you glory through your Son, Jesus
Christ.”

Now, some of these holy ones---

these saints---

are canonized by the Church.

The word, canon, means "right measure---
the right standard."

The Catechism says of the canonization of holy ones:

Canonization is

“the solemn declaration by the Pope
that a deceased member of the faithful
may be proposed as a model
and intercessor to the Christian faithful
and venerated as a saint
on the basis of the fact
that the person lived a life of heroic virtue,
or remained faithful to God through martyrdom.”

The Church's canonized saints, then,

are ones which have lived

the "right measure" of Christian life.

They sought God's will for them first and foremost,
and then lived it out on a day to day basis.

As we study their example,

they did not lead perfect lives---

they did not live charmed lives---

but they *were* lives of extra-ordinary faith---

faith in what God has revealed and promised,

and a *perseverance* in that belief.

To the saints,

following Christ was not a passing fad.

It was a way of life---

to the end of their days.

When we think about the Church's canonized saints,

we see persons who,

whether earlier or later in their life,

caught the attention

of the world around them.

The Church, in canonizing those

living an extra-ordinary right measure of Christian life,

folds them into the life of the Church,

to be honored,

and to be sources of inspiration.

In our own time,

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

left her convent in Calcutta

to live among the poor---

not for the sake of her own idea,

but in response to what she believed

God wanted her to do.

She was nervous, and had little money.

Her life would have been much easier in the convent.

Also, not too long ago,

I mentioned Saint Damien of Molokai

in a Sunday homily.

Having left his family in Belgium,

he traveled for priestly life

in the Missions of the Hawaiian Islands.

He served for 9 years before accepting

an assignment to serve the lepers on Molokai.

His superior wrote these fateful words to him:

"You may stay as long as your devotion dictates...."

He began the new mission to the lepers in 1873.

He died in 1889 of leprosy,

having witnessed, and then lived,

what some describe as a "living hell"

of the effects of the disease.

Through all his years of service,

he had grown to love dearly those he ministered to.

Would this be possible

if it were not for the grace of God,

and the willingness to follow God's lead?

It was God who had summoned him to this life,

and put the lepers into his heart.

Before getting too concerned,

we, ourselves, will not likely be called by God

to India or a leprosy colony.

But we are called to be holy,

to be "dedicated" to God,

to be saints,
right where we are.
Our lives are not likely be perfect or charmed,
but we can, by the use of our freedom,
persevere in faith.

Whether we are ever canonized,
or not, by the Church
is unimportant---
what is important, is that,
when someone encounters us,
will they be able to understand
what we believe
based on how we are living our life?