

2 Perspectives on Saints

Catholic Church celebrates the everyday Saints.

By: Rev. Barry Stechaschulte

The Daily Standard, Celina, OH – 10/31/2014 pg.8A

“Do you know someone who was a saint in his or her life – someone who was just always such a good person that you can’t even think of anything bad about him or her?

Everyone knows someone like that who was kind, generous and full of faith. They are not, however, the people who will get a statue made of themselves like the famous saints in the church. They are the everyday saints. That’s what the church celebrates each year on Nov. 1: the Feast of All Saints...

Instead of worrying about who’s in hell, we should be concentrating on getting to heaven. I really have no plans to go down there after I die. And I’m working as hard as I can not to. I want to go to heaven when I die...

We all are meant for heaven anyway. But God respects our freedom and we can, by our actions here on earth, choose otherwise. God prepares a place for each of us. How sad and disappointed he must feel when he sees so many empty rooms in the heavenly halls...

Let’s not let our Lord down. Let’s continue to cooperate with his grace and inspirations and accept the gift of eternal life he freely gives, at the cost of his son’s blood, shed on the cross...”

*The Rev. Barry Stechaschulte is pastor of Holy Rosary
And St. Patrick Catholic parishes.*

Gary’s Response follows.

Readers write

A different view of saints

In response to the Rev. Stechschelte's Oct. 31 letter concerning saints.

Many, if not all religions believe in a good works salvation. We all agree that we could be better. But how much goodness is necessary to bring a person to the threshold of heaven? Do we become saints by what we have accomplished?

The reverend wrote: "... someone who was just always such a good person that you can't even think of anything bad about him or her? ... Good people, who lived a righteous life ... we should be concentrating on getting to heaven ... I'm working as hard as I can not to go down there (hell) after I die."

The reverend is sure that there are: "... a lot of people in heaven. Good people, who by the grace of God lived a righteous life". But is not so sure about "... if many people are in hell. Your guess is as good as mine."

The question: Do you want to base your eternity on a guess?

He closes with "... Let's continue to cooperate with his grace and inspirations and accept the gift of eternal life he gives at the cost of his son's blood, shed on the cross."

In light of Catholic teaching this simply means, Jesus opened the gates of heaven by shedding his blood and now the Catholic can receive the sacraments, do the good works, devotions and time in purgatory necessary before entry into heaven.

The reverend didn't use any, but scripture teaches: John 20: 30-31 "... these have been written that you may believe ... and that believing you may have life in His name." 1 Corinthians 6: 9-11 "Do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? ... And such were some of you, but you were washed ... sanctified ... justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God."

Luke 16:19-31 The rich man suffering in the flames wanted the poor beggar Lazarus to be sent back to his five brothers to warn of the torment. But Abraham answered “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them ... If they do not ... neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.”

Jesus rose from the dead. Have you read and been persuaded to put all of your faith in Him?

The believing thief on the cross next to Jesus is the perfect example of how to become a saint. The earthly minded criminal said “aren’t you the Christ? Save yourself and us!” The other criminal rebuked him recognizing his sin and pending death saying “we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”

Then he turned to Jesus expressing his faith “Jesus, remember me when you enter into your kingdom.” Jesus answered “I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise” (Luke 23:38-43).

“Faith comes from hearing ... the word of God” (Romans 10:17). Read it! Become a saint by faith and then glorify God by living more like Christ!

**Gary Westgerdes
Celina**

www.thekeysofheaven.com

More on: The Catholic Perspective on Saints

from: The Catholic Answer – September/October 2011 pg. 29

ARE WE ALL SAINTS?

Q. An evangelical friend and I were talking about saints ... How do I answer properly?

A. Recall that St. Paul began many of his letters with greetings to “saints.” ...

Your friend, you see, has a point. In those greetings the key phrase is “those consecrated in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.” In a general sense, the term “saint” applies to any person who has been properly baptized and has received the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the Church’s teaching.

... the matter of status only marks the beginning of the significance of sainthood in Catholic teaching and practice.

... some people have come to her (the Church’s) attention because by God’s grace they achieved what is called “heroic sanctity” – that is, their lives were so closely configured to the life of the risen Lord that to a remarkable degree they reflected His love and His power. They are therefore not only sterling examples of what we should become; they are also capable of powerful intercession for those who call on them. As we invoke their prayers, they draw us ever more closely into the blessed Communion of Saints...

www.osv.com