



As summer ends and the days begin to cool down, we look forward to celebrating the great Solemnity of All Saints. It is a special day of the year when we remember not only the saints canonized by the Church, but also all those souls who have gone before, who loved God, and who are now in Heaven. St. Bernard wrote: "Clearly, if we venerate their memory, it serves us, not them. But I tell you, when I think of them, I feel myself inflamed by a tremendous yearning. Calling the saints to mind inspires, or rather arouses in us, above all else, a longing to enjoy their company, so desirable in itself. We long to share in the citizenship of Heaven, to dwell with the spirits of the blessed, to join the assembly of patriarchs, the ranks of the prophets, the council of apostles, the great host of martyrs, the noble company of confessors, and the choir of virgins. In short, we long to be united in happiness with all the saints."

Many Catholic families celebrate by having a party on All Hallows' Eve, where all the children dress up as saints or angels. What a wonderful way for children to get to know the lives and virtues of the saints! Through the excitement of designing a costume and dressing as a chosen saint for a few hours, children may be inspired to learn more about the saint and begin a friendship that may last a lifetime and beyond.

"Lord, I want to be in that number When the saints go marching in."

Everyone has heroes, maybe baseball stars, Olympic champions, famous singers, or even Superman! But remember that the true, real-life heroes are our saints, because they overcame the world, the flesh, and the devil, living only for what is truly good, beautiful, and eternal. They didn't do great things by their own power, but fell in love with God, united their wills to His, and allowed Him who is all-powerful to live in them. The saints reveal the true goal of life and give us an example of how to live it! St. Paul wrote, "Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win!" (Cor. 9:24)

If you have a child who likes to read, a collection of the lives of the saints would be an inspiring addition to your family library. There, your children will find adventure, danger, miracles, and the splendor of divine love! They will also meet heavenly friends who will guide and intercede for them on their journey through life to the Kingdom of Heaven. I grew up reading many saint stories, and I remember thinking that if they could become saints, so could I! Holiness is possible, even for me!

St. Therese of the Child Jesus, whose feast we celebrate on October 1st (or October 3rd, on the traditional calendar), desired to be a saint at an early age. As she grew, so did this desire, but in her mind, the kind of sanctity at-

tained by the great saints seemed an impossible goal for ordinary people like her. At the same time, she simply could not believe that God would put such a desire into her heart if it were impossible for her to achieve. With this intense desire to love Jesus, she prayerfully searched the Scriptures, and our Lord inspired her, giving her what is known today as her "Little Way." She died when she was only 24, but she had become a saint!

St. Thérèse's little way offers us a powerful yet simple means of achieving union with God. In the Scriptures, St. Thérèse found this passage: "He called a child, whom he put among them, and said, 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'" (Matthew 18:2-4)

In her autobiography, *Story Of A Soul*, St. Therese told how one day, when she was very little, her sister Léonie brought her and her sister Céline a basket filled with clothes and other trifles on which her doll was laid. "Here, dears," Léonie said, "choose whatever you like." Céline looked at it and took a woolen ball. After thinking about it for a minute, Therese put out her hand, saying, "I choose everything," "and I carried off both doll and basket without more ado." This childish incident was a forecast, so to speak, of her whole life. She wrote: "Later on, when the way of perfection was opened out before me, I realized that in order to become a Saint one must suffer much, always seek the most perfect path, and forget oneself. I also understood that there are many degrees of holiness, that each soul is free to respond to the calls of Our Lord, to do much or little for His Love—in a word, to choose amongst the sacrifices He asks. And then also, as in the days of my childhood, I cried out: 'My God, I choose everything, I will not be a Saint by halves, I am not afraid of suffering for Thee, I only fear one thing, and that is to do my own will. Accept the offering of my will, for I choose all that Thou wilt.'"

Many of us feel that we are ordinary people, just as St. Therese felt, needing a little way to holiness. I'm so grateful that she has passed on to us what Jesus taught her! She wrote, "Holiness does not consist in this or that practice; it consists in a disposition of the heart, which makes us always humble and little in the arms of God, well aware of our feebleness, but boldly confident in the Father's goodness." So how do I become like a little child? I believe that it is to have an overwhelming attachment to God as my Father. It is to trust Him, to speak to Him throughout the day, to try to see everything that happens to me, good or bad, as coming from

thing that happens to me, good or bad, as coming from His most loving hand. To become like a child is to once again choose to be little and to let our Father take care of us.

This love for the Father and unbounded trust in Him is the golden thread woven throughout the tapestry of Holy Mother Church's saints. We find it written on the heart of each and every one. Why? Because it was the one motivation of the Heart of Christ, it was the very fire in His Heart. This overwhelming love for the Father must take hold of our own hearts, too. From this love will come the strength needed for every moment of our lives. It is not just about 'making it' to Heaven, but about sharing in the Divine Sonship of Christ and saying with Him, "Abba, Father!" Let us always remember, as the saints who have gone before us have shown, God is *my Father*. He loves me and I desire to become a saint *for Him!* Let us make a resolution of something small, or "little," that we can do daily to increase our love for the Father. It does not have to be great, but let it be *full of love*.

We see so much evil in the world, and we may feel that the darkness is overwhelming. Must we watch helplessly, or can we play our part in bringing Christ's light into the world? Our Lord once spoke to St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, saying, "Come, be My Light!" Our Lord tells us in the Scriptures to let our light shine before men. I would suggest that we can't change the world, for the only person we can change (with God's grace) is ourselves. We must begin there. As we grow in holiness, we reveal in our lives the light and love of Jesus and His Father, our Father. We may not see it, but this light will touch all those with whom live. So, this year as we celebrate the saints, let us strive to know them better, imitate their virtue, and ask them to help us along our own journey to our Father's House. 🍂

*"The ways of the Lord are not easy,
but we were not created for an easy life,
but for great things, for goodness."*

Pope Benedict XVI



Mother Mary Agnes is the superior of the Seraphic Adorers of the Child Jesus, a contemplative order in the Diocese of La Crosse, Wisconsin. The community is dedicated to Eucharistic adoration and promoting devotion to the Divine Child Jesus.

<https://seraphicadorers.com/>