

WHO ARE YOUR SAINTS OF GOD?

Deacon Colleen Spaeth – Nov 2, 1003

Today in the Church calendar we celebrate All Saints Day. There are three days in the Church year that supplant the Lord's Sabbath – Feast of the Nativity, the Feast of our Patronal Saint, St. Michael, and All Saints Day.

So it might be well to ask ourselves, what is a Saint??

A priest once told me he asked his congregation if they had ever known a saint, and a man from the back corner raised his hand and yelled out, "My wife's first husband."

I would like to share someone with you who represented a saint to me. He was born in 1922, to a poor family in Raleigh, North Carolina. His dad died very young, and his mom and he moved up to join his already married sister in Trenton. He was a simple man. He had no fancy college education. He worked for some time at Fort Dix, where he met his future wife, and together after marriage they settled down in Mt. Holly, and God blessed them with six children.

There is one story I remember vividly – he took his second daughter shopping for a prom dress, holding her hand and looking at dresses, and she will never forget how special she felt, her dad, spending time with her, all by herself. The dress was never bought that day, it came from a cousin's closet, but that day was truly a special one for that teenager.

Both Joe and his wife worked two jobs in order to pay for Catholic School education for their kids. He worked as a warehouse manager in a book distribution center in Riverside, and moonlighted as a waiter at the Village Inn in Mt. Holly. People would come and wait for a table with Joe, there was just something very special about Joe being your waiter, Joe had the gift of making every person he talked with feel special. He lived each day as if it were his last.

He was not a holy man. He enjoyed his beer and Lucky Strikes, and loved to play poker with the guys. You never heard Joe mention God, or anything for that matter that would "sound" religious. But Joe knew how to love. He understood what love was, and he was love. So to this second daughter, he was a man of God. He taught me how to live life to the fullest, and he knew that he was not in charge.

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Unfortunately, Joe died in 1985 of lung cancer. Hundreds of people lined up at his viewing to let his children know that Joe Moore was indeed a special human being

Who are the saints in your life? What lessons have you learned from them?

Yesterday I heard the stories of two people. Esther Hine.

Eshter died yesterday, her 56th wedding anniversary. Her husband Dick and son Rich came into church and shared Esther's story with me. Esther raised three children, loved to skate, loved live, and she will be missed by her family, as well as her church family.

Today we remember with the dedication of this wonderful window the life of Marge Vaughn. Her daughter Elaine shared her story with me. In May of 2002 Marge died. She was 92. Marge loved her church and her God. She sang in the choir until she was 88. She served on the community ambulance squad, and worked as a tax collector. She was a generous and respected business person. Her "God will provide" attitude served her well. Hers was a life of a true Christian. Her saintly presence is still missed and today remembered.

So today, this wonderful feast of All Saints reminds us of the saints of ancient times and our saints, our personal life experience saints as well. We are lucky, there is the door to the church, and wouldn't it be wonderful if we were to envision ourselves walking through that door as sinners, and walking out as saints?

It is possible, for all us. Look around you today, the saints are sitting next to you, they are all around, smile, appreciate their presence in your life.

There's a favorite hymn of mine I would like to close with,

"They lived no only in ages past, there are hundreds of thousands still,

The world is bright with the joyous saints who love to do Jesus' will.

You can meet them in school, or in lanes, or at sea, in church, or in trains, or in shops, or at tea,

For the saints of God are just folk like me,

And I mean to be one too.