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November 5 2020

Dear Parishioners;

We just celebrated All Saints Day and All Souls Day and so I thought I would say a few words about those who have gone before us so that we might understand a little better how God interacts with us and what makes God happy with us.

So I want to tell you a story about my Grandmother on my father's side. And if that sounds a little formal, that is because we were much closer to my mother's parents, Nana and Papa, because Dad and his Mom had issues that no one seemed to want to talk about but that clearly affected their relationship.

The fact is, Grandmother was tough. And she had a strong devotion to St. Jude. Now, St. Jude is the Patron Saint of lost causes. And that is because over the centuries people have hesitated to ask him to pray for them because they didn't want to get their intentions confused with Judas.

My Grandmother had a fairly large statue of St. Jude in her home and when she needed to, she asked for the prayers of St. Jude, and if things went her way the statue stayed where it was. But if St. Jude did not come through for her, she would take the statue and turn him upside down and stick him in the corner. As I said, Grandmother was tough and she liked to get her way. Come to think of it, my Dad liked to get his way too so maybe their worst problem was that they were too much alike.

St. Anthony, who I know as the Patron Saint of lost things, has always been one of my go-to Saints. From my earliest years, if I had lost something and I had looked everywhere for it, my Mom would ask me if I had asked St. Anthony to help with his prayers. My Mom would ask me in such away as there was no doubt that he would help and he has many times. There is one item that St. Anthony doesn't seem capable of finding and that is lost golf balls. Actually, I don't know that because every time I have been tempted to ask for St. Anthony's help on the golf course, I have stopped myself and even said clearly that I did not want his help because there have been times when God has used St. Anthony to encourage my faith and I don't want to mess with that.

I remember a time when I was in the seminary and a fellow student told me a story about his mother and St. Anthony. She had lost a diamond ring and

of course she had looked everywhere for it. Finally, she turned to St. Anthony for help and had even promised to donate three hundred dollars to charity if she was able to find her ring. And low and behold, she did find her ring and in a place that she swears she had covered numerous times in her diligent search. And once she got a little ways past her joy, she turned to her son and asked him if she still had to donate the three hundred dollars. And the answer is yes, which is why we shouldn't make such promises even if we are desperate because that isn't how it works. We can't bribe God or the Saints. Their coming through for us is just a bonus of having and acting on our faith.

Mary and the Saints remind us that the God who calls us by name and the God that we seek likes to share the limelight with us. Our God doesn't need to be centre stage all the time. God wants us to believe in Him and He also wants us to believe in the community of faith and the power of loving service. When we celebrate Mary for intervening on our behalf, and when we honour the Saints for their help, that light is also shared by God and God is happy to be a part of all that goodness. Which is why we don't have to make promises we can't keep, because we are God's children and we are the blessed in which God is well pleased. So we pray:

Dear Father, we thank you for the communion of saints through which we are united in Christ with those who have walked before us and who now walk with us in the faith. We are grateful for the way they have shared their lives, struggles, faith, courage and acts of mercy during their lifetimes so that we might today live better lifetimes of joyful service to You and our neighbour in your kingdom. With them we pray in one accord, "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Preserve the vivid lessons of their deeds of heroic trust, healing compassion and sacrificial love. Inspire our hearts to dare to follow in their fearless footsteps. We make this prayer to you, the God of all nations, who calls us each by name, so that we might aspire to holiness and service in concert with the work of the saints of all the ages. To you be the glory and praise and honor for all time to come. Amen.

May God be gracious to us and bless us, now and forever.
Pat Monette/Pastor