

ALL SAINTS 2020

Matthew 5:1-12

The Beatitudes

Sainthood would seem to be a very exclusive club, like the *Hall of Fame* or a group of *Lifetime Achievement* winners, but the communion of saints is actually much larger than just the saints formally recognized by the Catholic Church. John's vision in Revelation of an uncountable multitude gives a good picture of those in the presence of the Lord for eternity.

Each and every one of us can aspire to this outcome; it is not restricted to those who live unimaginable exceptional lives. For all we know, there may be thousands of saints for every saint who has actually been canonized. We are all called to be saints. One person commented, "When I read a statement by Mother Teresa that to be a saint, you have to seriously want to be one, I was taken aback. I felt an invitation, even encouragement, to reflect on what I had chosen in my life, with my life."

There is a story that the famous Cure of Ars, in France, Saint John Vianney, had told a Marianist, that those brothers will get to heaven if they remain faithful to the charism of Father Chaminade, which is mainly the charism of Mary, the Mother of Christ. I believe him. It was the community spirit of the brothers living together that first attracted me to the Marianist. Later on I realized that the Marianists were a teaching order consisting of mainly brothers and priests. Fortunately, their ministry was changing where now we even have a brother doctor, here in Cincinnati.

I have come to realize that these brothers and sisters of Chaminade and all the saints are men and women struggling with their sinfulness, failures and life's disappointments. In their relationship with God, they were prone to doubts, confusion, selfishness and even anger. In other words, they were very much like us. Yet, despite their limitations and imperfections, they never gave up on saying 'yes' to Christ. They continued to say 'no' to worldly values and concerns. The saints, it seems, would not serve two masters. They strove to be faithful to the kind of life the Beatitudes urge us to live, even to death.

The saint's lives reveal that each of us is being called to live our life as a child of God, caring for peace, reconciliation and the poor. And yet it is not expected to be a private goal or a personal achievement, but a community accomplishment. That is why we call it the Community of Saints. Paul even referred to his newly formed communities as saints, and his communities referred to themselves as people "On the Way." Eventually they would be known as Christians.

So we, as the community of Saint Francis de Sales, are on the way, as community of saints trying to live the life that Jesus called us to through his Beatitudes. We have saints among our community and among our relatives and friends.

When I was a kid, I happen to look through our family bible, very large volume for a little guy. In the middle section were pages specifically for family information and there I found my name and the names of my brothers and sisters and many relatives listed by dates of birth and even with their middle names. But I found four entries very strange; one had the name Joseph and three had the same name, angels.

I asked, "Who is this guy called Joseph Mark?"

She answered, "He is your brother who died six weeks after he was born, your brother John's twin. And since he was baptized, he is now a saint with Jesus in heaven!"

I was impressed! A saint! "What about these three called angel?"

"They died before they were born, but they were not baptized," she said. "So they are angels," which was my mother's category for them. She never used the word "Limbo."

We all have saints, and we know who they are, even though they never made it on the "*list*." We know who they are, and that is good enough for me.