



THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS

Cynthia L. Reyes

One of the truths we believe in is the “communion of saints”. This is the spiritual bond that exists between all the members of the church, not only the visible church here on earth but also with those who has passed through this world.

The church, which is basically the people, consists of the Church Militant, the Church Suffering and the Church Triumphant. Members of the Church Militant are the people who are still on earth, still working and fighting to gain eternal life. Members of the Church Suffering are the people who have died and who are assured of one day seeing God, but still need to be purified before they meet God face to face. And finally, members of the Church Triumphant are the people who have died and are now with God in heaven. This include all our relatives and friends whom we know led a holy life. The only reason we do not call them saints versus the other saints we know like St. Francis, St. Theresa, etc. is that they have not been formally declared a saint by the church through the process of canonization.

Though the church is in different states of life, we continue to live as one, helping and praying for each other. We on earth pray to the saints in heaven and for the poor souls in purgatory. The people in heaven and purgatory continue to pray for us. So the unity of the church still continues, united in the belief in Christ.

I know that all people who die and go to heaven are saints. I know that they still are saints even if we do not call them St. So and So. I know that we should pray for the deceased so they will be with God in heaven. I know that we should pray for them in case they are in purgatory suffering for their sins. But one thing I did not know, or even crossed my mind until recently is to pray to our deceased relatives or friends whom we believe are now with God.

It was only a few years back, did I realize that we should or could also pray to our deceased relative or friend. This was when I attended the funeral of my cousin. At the homily the priest emphasized, “Do not pray for her, pray to her”. This got me thinking. Yes, it is true. We should be praying to her, just as we pray to other known saints. She is a saint just like them. She is with God. She can intercede for us.

Perhaps this does not cross our mind because we know them to have just been like us living here on earth, feeling the same joys and sorrows, going through the same things we are going through. Whereas the canonized saints, we learned of them

already as saints. They are special people of God who are now with Him in heaven. For us they are already up on a pedestal.

All of us are called to be saints. But what does it take to become a saint. The Prayer of St. Francis which most of us know by heart tells us what we should do. And so do the other prayers from other saints.

St. Augustine:

Almighty and everlasting God, in whom we live and move and have our being, who hast created us for thyself, so that we can find rest only in thee; grant unto us purity of heart and strength of purpose, that no selfish passion may hinder us from knowing thy will, no weakness from doing it; but in thy light may we see light clearly, and in thy service find perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

St. Richard Chichester:

*O most merciful Redeemer, Friend and Brother,
May we know thee more clearly,
Love thee more dearly,
Follow thee more nearly;
Forever and ever. Amen.*

St. Ignatius of Loyola:

*Take O Lord,
and receive my entire liberty,
my understanding and my whole will.
All that I am and all that I possess you have given me.
I surrender it all to you to be disposed of according to your will.
Give me only your love and your grace;
with these I will be rich enough and will desire nothing more.
Amen.*

St. Ignatius of Loyola:

*Lord, teach me to be generous,
Teach me to serve you as you deserve;
to give and not to count the cost,
to fight and not to heed the wounds,
to toil and not to seek for rest,
to labor and ask for no reward except that
of knowing that I do your will. Amen.*