

Good News

Dear Friends,

WHY PRAY TO THE SAINTS?

When I began my assignment at All Saints, I took it as a sign to increase my devotion to the saints. One of the riches and beauties of the Catholic faith is that we venerate the saints in public worship and private devotion. There are many times throughout the Church calendar where the Mass texts acknowledge the saint of the day, drawing attention to at least one of their virtues and opening the door for our hope to attain those virtues. Once that door has been opened, we are invited to take one step closer to heaven.

This means, we are taking more strides to be the holy people that God calls us to be. This is what makes our lives as Catholics difficult. There is so much to live up to! Again, our focus should be on virtues, forgiveness, healing and joy, to name a few. Let's not get stuck on regret, beating ourselves up, negativity or the like. And to help us with this, the Church has given us the Communion of Saints. Having taken their place at the Heavenly Banquet, they exist in part to intercede for us. A saint is like a friend in faith, probably a best friend, and the types of friends are the ones who we should turn to when we need something, right? Here is what the Church says on *the intercession of the saints*:

"Being more closely united to Christ, those who dwell in heaven fix the whole Church more firmly in holiness. . . . They do not cease to intercede with the Father for us, as they proffer the merits which they acquired on earth through the one mediator between God and men, Christ Jesus So by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped." (CCC 956)

Our need for the saints is clear. In last week's article, I wrote that we now conclude mass with Five Hail Mary's and St. Michael the Archangel prayer with an invocation to Venerable Nelson Baker and Venerable Fulton J. Sheen. We have a particular purpose for invoking the intercession of the saints with the needs for Fr. Brown's healing, recovering and restoration to good health. And, we are also praying that their cause for Sainthood be advanced. How did these servants get to this point? In part, because of miracles.

A woman named Debbie Hennessy from Northern Virginia was diagnosed with Stage 4 melanoma in the spring of 2008. She had already gone through treatments and surgery, when her husband encouraged her to do something she truly enjoyed in the six to nine months she was given to live. She joined the North Metro Chorus of Toronto so she could sing and tour internationally, fulfilling one of her dreams. She found herself at the Buffalo Airport on the evening of June 8, waiting for a flight to return home to Virginia. She found an empty seat near a man who turned out to be Fr. Stefan Starzynski, a priest from Virginia, who had been on a retreat to Fr. Nelson Baker's tomb. While conversing, Fr. Starzynski told Debbie that Fr. Baker appeared to him and asked if he could pray over her. She said yes, and in the midst of a crowded airport terminal, threw aside any sense of embarrassment that this ritual action could bring. The flight boarded, they parted ways in Virginia, and Debbie returned home, thinking she would make further preparations for the end. She returned to her oncologist in August and while expecting the worst, the doctor sat in his chair, shaking his head and smiling, told Debbie that her scans were clear.

If I or the Church have not sold you on this yet, perhaps this will help (author/source unknown):

Prayer is a better activity than any other....
 Prayer is a better substitute for worrying about things that are out of our control...
 Prayer is a better choice than being negative....
 Prayer is a better alternative to whining or complaining....

An update on All Saints Academy: As of this writing, 120 students are enrolled and \$90,000 has been collected from donations. The large increase of enrollments has offset the 2020/2021 budget needs and far exceeded our goal of 101 students. Contributions are still coming in and we are grateful for all who have participated. With this said and with the green light from the State of New York, All Saints Academy will open in the fall for its 165th year of operation.

Next week, I will write about a medical miracle attributed to Venerable Fulton J. Sheen.

In Christ,

Fr. Jones

