

Reflection for the feast of All Saints

Today, on Sunday November 1, 2020 we celebrate the *Feast of All Saints*, this day is also known as *All Hallows' Day*. The *Feast of All Saints* is not only celebrated by the Roman Catholic Church but it is also celebrated by the Anglican Communion, the Methodist Church, and the Lutheran Church. Because this year the Feast is celebrated on a Sunday it would seem that a greater focus is placed on this Feast than in other years when the Feast is not on a Sunday. The Church has celebrated the *Feast of All Saints* as far back as the 4th century, but at that time the Feast was celebrated on May 13. By the 8th century the Feast had been moved to November 1, which is the current day that it is celebrated on.

We can find the intention and the meaning of the *Feast of All Saints* in the actions of Pope Boniface IV, when in the year 609 he dedicated the Pantheon in Rome as a Catholic Church in honor of the Blessed Virgin and all the Martyrs. All Saints Day was expanded from a Feast for Mary and the Martyrs to include all the Saints by Pope Gregory III in the 8th century. Pope Boniface IV and Pope Gregory III felt it was important to have a day to remember and reflect on all the Saints who have gone before us in faith.

When I was ordained a priest a childhood friend, Joe gave me a book with the title Dictionary of Patron Saints' Names. This book was written by Fr. Thomas W. Sheehan and it contains 14,000 names of Saints. Joe informed me when he gave me the book that he got it for me so that I would know that I am not alone in my journey of faith. With 14,000 people that have already taken the journey and the path that we are on, how could we be alone? Joe and I got a good laugh when he gave me the book, but it was and is a very thoughtful gift. I will have to admit over the years I have used the book countless times and at this point the binding is broken and pages tend to fall out but it is still a very useful book. I tend to use this book when I meet with parents to discuss the baptism of their child.

I do tend to take this book out from time to time and just read about the different saints and their journey in this world. Because this book contains 14,000 Saints, even after 28 years of owning this book I seem to always discover a Saint I was not aware of. For example did you know that there are 24 Saints that have the name Wolf or in Latin Lupus? One, St. Wolf was born in Lombardy and after a pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Martin; he became a monk and preached the Gospel in the Ardennes. In time he led a hermit's life and passed away in the year 594. It is amazing to think that there are 24 people with the name Wolf that are Saints and one named Wolfgang. In the end the *Feast of All Saints* reminds us that it does not matter if our name is Martha, Mary, Stephen or Wolf, what is important is that we live a holy life following in the footsteps of Christ Jesus. The Saints through the way that they lived their lives and through their intercession can help us in our journey in this world and in the next.