NATIONAL CATHOLIC REPORTER
Published on *National Catholic Reporter* (http://ncronline.org)

A reflection for All Saints' Day

Isabella R. Moyer | Nov. 2, 2012 NCR Today

I love saints. They are the spiritual superheroes of our church. The glorious communion of saints provides us with access to a massive list of prayer partners who pray with us and pray for us. The list includes the official "greats" of our church history. It also includes family and friends whose holiness and love directly touched and enriched our lives. We all have our favorite saints we relate to and who inspire us.

I need these heavenly models of holiness. I also need earthly models of holiness. Saints are all around us, women and men whose generous spirit reflects the Gospel call to love and serve God and others. Some do it by making the ordinary holy through a spirit of simplicity and humility. Some do it by showing extraordinary courage in sickness and adversity. Some do it by railing against injustice and working to bring equality and dignity to all.

One of the messages from the Synod of Bishops for the new evangelization is the call to holiness. This sounds overly simplistic and obvious, but it is at the root of all we do as a church and as the People of God. Of course, we all have different ideas of holiness. Monday's Gospel reading invites us into the beatitudes, that wonderful litany of "Blessed are." In the beatitudes, holiness is equated with being poor in spirit, meek, mourning, hungering for righteousness, merciful, and clean of heart.

Interestingly, there is no mention of blessed are the rule-makers, the obedient, the self-righteous or the judgmental. We all know what Jesus thought of those who equated holiness with obsessive discipline and laws. Jesus was about reaching people in their hearts, giving them reasons for hope and joy, and encouraging true and lasting conversion.

We continue to be surrounded by prophets of doom who castigate and blame the women and men of today for succumbing to the evils of secularism and materialism. These pessimistic prophets seem unable to see holiness in the world, or acknowledge that saints are living among us in the messiness of life. Sadly, they see holiness only within the four walls of the church.

Yes, we need a strong and vibrant community where we can pray and be formed, but the church is not meant to keep us in. The church's role is to send us forth. Saints know this. They are women and men whose lives flow seamlessly from prayer to action. We need to hear their stories and be inspired by their witness.

We also need to hear the stories of holiness among our leaders, leaders like the martyred Archbishop Christophe Munzihirwa [1] of Bukavu, Congo. We need to hear more from leaders like Cardinal-designate Luis A. Tagle [2] of Manila who provide a voice of optimism and hope in our church today.

We need our saints. Who are the saints, past or present, who inspire you?

Source URL (retrieved on *10/20/2014 - 00:02*): http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/reflection-all-saints-day

Links:

[1] http://ncronline.org/blogs/ncr-today/sixteen-years-ago-today-death-came-archbishop
[2] http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/evangelization-more-than-strategy-cardinal-elect-says/