

Homily for All Saints Day - November 1, 2015

The great **Yogi Berra** once said, “Love is the most important thing in the world, but baseball is pretty good, too.” Baseball is on my mind since the Royals are in the World Series and are playing really well. If a person wanted to know how to become a great baseball player, you would ask a professional baseball player, wouldn’t you? Even more important than baseball is love, as Yogi Berra said, and the greatest love is that of the saints who we celebrate on this All Saints Day. Maybe we should ask they saints themselves how to become saints?

First, we must know this. Everyone in heaven is a saint. There is no one in heaven who is not a saint. If we want to get to heaven (and we really **MUST** do so), therefore, we must become saints. All Saints Day celebrates all the saints, not just the canonized. How do I become a saint? Let’s ask the saints themselves?

St. Teresa of Avila - “All that the beginner in prayer has to do—and you must not forget this, for it is very important—is to labor and be resolute and prepare himself with all possible diligence **to bring his will into conformity with the will of God**. As I shall say later, you may be quite sure that this comprises the very greatest perfection that can be attained on the spiritual road.” (from “Interior Castle”)

Our will must be in conformity with God’s will. This is the overarching way to become a saint.

The biggest mistake is that we try the exact opposite. We try to tell God what to do instead of asking God what we should do. “Lord please do this, and this, and this....” So the first way to bring our will into conformity with God’s will is:

(1) Pray “Lord, what is your will in this situation, this day? What do you want me to do?” We should pray this every day, and very often throughout the day.

St. Thérèse of Lisieux. “Holiness consists simply in doing God’s will, and being just what God wants us to be.”

The second way to bring our will into conformity with God’s will is:

(2) Be just what God wants us to be. Be who you God made you to be. We are all unique.

St. Francis de Sales "Don't waste your time dreaming of being someone else. Don't try to be someone else. Work and pray at being yourself. Be who you are, where you are. Concentrate on the little everyday problems and pains that beset you. Reserve your best efforts; expend your spiritual energy on what is right before you. This is what God asks of you. Listen closely. This is very important - and very misunderstood - for we all prefer to do what is to our personal liking. Very few of us choose duty first, or the will of God. Don't cultivate someone else's garden. Grow where you are planted."

Please note the point that God's will is not remote and long-term and mysterious (though it does include that), but mainly God's will is about what is right before us —what is happening right now. So right now at this moment I can safely say that God's will is to listen to this homily. In a few minutes, God's will will be to prepare well for Holy Communion. In a few more minutes, God's will will be to be nice to each other in the parking lot, and so on.

God's will is also to be ourselves, and to do that, we need to make an effort to know who we are. Do we think about that?

(not a canonized saint) **Thomas Merton** - What can we gain by sailing to the moon if we are not able to cross the abyss that separates us from ourselves? This is the most important of all voyages of discovery, and without it, all the rest are not only useless, but disastrous.

St. Catherine of Siena - "If you are what you should be, you will set the world on fire."

(3) Be willing to suffer. Jesus said we must take up our crosses. That is God's will.

Saint Francis de Sales - All the science of the saints is included in these two things: To do, and to suffer. And whoever had done these two things best, has made himself most saintly.

(4) God does not will us to sin...even venial sin. Never.

St. Teresa of Avila 'Keep this in mind, for it is very important advice, so do not neglect it until you find you have such a fixed determination not to offend the Lord that you would rather lose a thousand lives and be persecuted by the whole world, than commit one mortal sin, and until you are most careful not to commit venial sins.'

(5) Not only should we follow the will of God, but of other people - superiors. God's will works thru others.

St. Philip Neri "Obedience is a short cut to perfection."

"They who really wish to advance in the ways of God, must give themselves up into the hands of their superiors always and in everything; and they who are not living under obedience must subject themselves of their own accord to a learned and discreet confessor, whom they must obey in the place of God, disclosing to him with perfect freedom and simplicity the affairs of their soul, and they should never come to any resolution without his advice."

"There is nothing which gives greater security to our actions, or more effectually cuts the snares the devil lays for us, than to follow another person's will, rather than our own, in doing good."

For me God's will is made manifest by my superiors: Archbishop Naumann (to whom as a priest I made a promise of obedience) and my spiritual director - Sr. Susan. I always have list of things she wants me to work on.

For you it is different, but there certainly is someone in your life that your should surrender your will to. For children, they should do the will of their parents. For spouses, the will of their spouse. And so on.

(6) Fake it till we make it.

At some point we may worry, become discouraged, or despair of becoming a saint. Don't be discourage, just start trying and stop worrying. Fake being a saint till you make it.

(not a canonized saint, but surely in heaven) **C. S. Lewis** - "The rule for us all is perfectly simple. Do not waste time bothering whether you "love" your neighbor; act as if you did. As soon as we do this we find one of the great secrets. When you are behaving as if you love someone, you will presently come to love him."

Finally, remember that doing God's will is what saves us. (Bring out the big guns now...)

Blessed Virgin Mary - "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38)

Through Mary's "yes" to God's will, Jesus enters the world—our salvation.

Jesus - "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. (Matthew 7:21)

"because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me." (John 6:38)

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done." (Luke 22:42)

Jesus saves us exactly by doing His Father's will. Clearly, striving to do God's will is the path to salvation, to heaven, to becoming a saint.

Our Gospel, the Beatitudes are attitudes that express all this another way.

To summarize, to become saints, and we **MUST** become saints we **MUST Strive to do God's will in all things:**

- 1) Pray asking God what his will his for here and now
- 2) Be who God made us to be.
- 3) Be willing to suffer, to take up our cross.
- 4) Avoid sin, even venial sin, at all cost
- 5) Obey will of others, especially those in a position of authority
- 6) Don't worry, just do it, keep trying, fake it till you make it

In doing God's will, we too will someday be numbered among the saints.