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Pope Francis: "Saints in everyday life"

In his June 21 general audience, Pope Francis spoke about the important role of the saints in the Church, and the need for "saints in everyday life."

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Dear Brothers and Sisters, good morning!

On the day of our Baptism, the invocation of the Saints resounded for us. At that moment many of us were children, carried in our

parents' arms. Shortly before carrying out the anointing with the oil of the catechumens, symbol of God's strength in the fight against evil, the priest invited the whole assembly to pray for those who were about to receive Baptism, invoking the intercession of the Saints. That was the first time, in the course of our life, in which we were gifted with this company of "older" brothers and sisters — the Saints — who passed by our same way, who knew our toils and live for ever in God's embrace. The Letter to the Hebrews describes this company that surrounds us with the expression "*multitude of witnesses*" (12:1). The Saints are thus: a multitude of witnesses.

In the fight against evil, we Christians do not despair. Christianity cultivates *an incurable confidence*; it does not believe that the negative and disintegrating forces can prevail. The last word on

the history of man is not hatred, it is not death, it is not war. In every moment of life we are helped by God's hand and also by the discreet presence of all believers that "have preceded us with the sign of faith" (Roman Canon). Their existence tells us first of all that the Christian life is not an unattainable ideal. And, at the same time, it comforts us: we are not alone, the Church is made up of innumerable brethren, often anonymous, that have preceded us and that, by the action of the Holy Spirit, are involved in the affairs of those that are still down here.

The invocation of the Saints at Baptism is not the only one that marks the way of the Christian life. When an engaged couple consecrate their love in the Sacrament of Marriage, invoked again for them — this time as a couple — is the intercession of the Saints. And this invocation is source of confidence for

the two young people who begin the “journey” of conjugal life. One who truly loves has the desire and the courage to say “for ever,” – “for ever” — but knows that he/she has need of Christ’s grace and the help of the Saints, to be able to live marital life forever. Not as some say: “while love lasts.” No: for ever! Otherwise, it is better if they do not get married. – either for ever or not at all.

Therefore, in the nuptial liturgy the presence of the Saints is invoked.

And in difficult moments it is necessary to have the courage to raise one’s eyes to Heaven, thinking of the many Christians who went through tribulation and kept their Baptismal garments white, washing them in the Blood of the Lamb (Cf. *Revelation* 7:14): thus says the Book of Revelation. God never abandons us: every time we are in need one of His Angels will come to help us rise again and to infuse consolation in us — “Angels” sometimes with a human

face and heart, because God's Saints are always here, hidden in our midst. This is difficult to understand and also to imagine, but the Saints are present in our life. And when someone invokes a Saint it is precisely because he/she is close to us.

Priests also keep the memory of an invocation of Saints pronounced over them. It is one of the most touching moments of the liturgy of Ordination. The candidates lie on the ground with their face on the floor. And the whole assembly, led by the Bishop, invokes the intercession of the Saints. A man would remain crushed under the weight of the mission entrusted to him, but hearing that the whole of Paradise is behind him, that God's grace will never be lacking because Jesus is always faithful, then one can leave serene and heartened. We are not alone.

And what are we? We are dust that aspires to Heaven. Our strength is weak, but powerful is the mystery of the grace that is present in the life of Christians. We are faithful to this earth, which Jesus loved in every instant of His life, but we know and want to hope in the transfiguration of the world, in its definitive fulfilment where, finally, there will be no more tears, evil or suffering.

May the Lord give to all of us *the hope of being Saints*. However, one of you might ask me: “Father, can one be a Saint in everyday life?” Yes, one can. “But does this mean that we have to pray the whole day?” No, it means that one must do one’s duty the whole day: pray, go to work, look after the children. However, everything must be done with the heart open to God, so that work – also in sickness and in suffering, also in difficulties – is open to God, and thus we can become Saints. May the

Lord give us the hope of being Saints. We must not think it is something difficult, that it is easier to be delinquent than Saints! No. We can be Saints because the Lord helps us; it is He who helps us.

It is the great gift that each one of us can give the world. May the Lord give us the grace to believe so profoundly in Him that we become images of Christ for this world. Our history is in need of “mystics”: of persons that reject all domination, that aspire to charity and fraternity; men and women who live accepting also a portion of suffering, because they take charge of others’ toil. However, without these men and women the world would not have hope. Therefore, I wish you – and I wish also for myself – that the Lord give us the hope of being Saints.

Thank you!

[Translation by Zenit]

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