

There is a story about Saint Pope John 23<sup>rd</sup> before he became Pope, he was an archbishop and the Pope's ambassador to Paris. He was at an elegant dinner party, seated across from him was a woman who was wearing a very attractive dress. Someone turned to him and said, "Your excellency what a scandal the way she is dressed. Aren't you embarrassed that everyone is looking at that woman?" And he replied, "Oh no, everyone is looking at me, to see if I'm looking at the woman."

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him. He began to teach them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven."

A young boy was once asked, "what is a Saint?" The only saints he had ever seen were the saints in the stained-glass windows in Church. So, he replied very simply: "A saint is someone who lets the light shine through!" "A saint is someone who lets the light shine through." What a great answer.

A Canonized Saint is someone the church recognizes as being in heaven. On this feast of All Saints, we might be thinking, “how does someone become a Canonized Saint in the Church?”

There are three steps necessary for someone to be canonized or declared a Saint. First the person is given the title Venerable, which means highly respected or admired; the next step is when the person is given the title “Blessed” and the final step is when a person is declared a Saint. In order for a person to be given the title Venerable, the local Bishop does an extensive examination of the person's life. If the Bishop determines that the person has lived an exceptionally virtuous life, then the findings are sent to the Vatican for approval by theologians and finally the pope.

Once that process is complete a person is declared Venerable; people then can ask for their intercession. In order to move to the next stage, one miracle has to take place through their intercession. The miracle is usually instantaneous healing, with no scientific explanation. Before the healing is recognized as a miracle, the case is first examined by a group of doctors, then a panel of Theologians, then it goes to the Pope for final approval. Once this process is complete the person is given the title “Blessed.”

The final step to Sainthood required a second miracle take place through the intercession of the person. The second miracle goes through the same extensive process as the first miracle before the Pope declares the person as a Saint.

Over 10,000 people have been declared a Saint.

There was a period of time when Pope John Paul II seemed to be canonizing a lot of Saints. One of Mother Theresa's sisters asked "Mother, how does one become a Saint?" Mother laughed and replied, "You should die soon because the Pope is canonizing everyone."

On Thursday morning I did burial prayers for a man named Earl, who like the Saints, let Christ light shine. Those who knew Earl described him as someone who impacted the lives of many. Earl was involved with many things throughout his life, and engaged in each one of them with a wonder and excitement, that brought others joy and made them smile. He had a love for everyone he met, he loved the world around him, he loved the sound of music and loved to dance. Earl was a special, unique human being who has a special gift of giving and receiving love. He made an impact on everyone he met for he made everyone feel special. In so many ways, Earl possessed what so many people are searching for, unconditional love. Earl was a bright light and shining star. When we look to Heaven, and see a sparkle, we know it is him.

Earl was unique because he was a person who had Down Syndrome but that did not define him. Earl showed the world around him what unconditional love looks like. Earl will never become a canonized saint but he brought Christ light where ever he was.

The Saints were people who came in all different shapes and sizes; some old, some young, rich, poor, some educated, some unable to read. We all admire and have devotions to the Saints but our challenge is to try to imitate them, like Earl.

It may seem like an impossible task to imitate the Saints but Saint Mother Theresa believe that there was one simple way of doing it. She said, "Spread love wherever you go, be the living expression of God's kindness in the world, kindness in your eyes, kindness in your face, kindness in your smile, kindness in your warm greeting."

Author Leo Buscalia describes kindness this way, "Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have a potential to turn a life around. It's overwhelming to consider the continuous opportunities there are to make our presence felt."

Take some time each day this week and invite the Light of Christ into your heart; simple pray: Come Lord Jesus, Come."

Let us pray: please pray after me: Lord Jesus, your light dwells within me, give me the grace to let your light shine before others. Amen and Amen.