

Wednesday Church Epistle

March 17, 2021

Hello Methodist Friends,

Debbie Newhouse here. I was asked to write an Epistle for Saint Patrick's Day. Some of you know I teach (remotely) at a Catholic School back in Idaho. So, saints are an integral part of my days with my middle school students. On All Saints Day (November 1st) each year, the kids dress up as and share information about their chosen saint as they parade around the school. This is especially handy when the bishop comes for a visit and the principal doesn't want any inappropriate Halloween attire... We can just wait to dress up until the following day and stick with famous people from the church; many of whom have stories that are most definitely Halloween-worthy!

In these All Saints Day Parades Saint Patrick, 5th century Patron Saint of Ireland, credited with bringing Christianity to that country would always be represented. There would also be other visitors such as the French priest, Saint John Baptist de La Salle, founder of Catholic Schools, Saint Joan of Arc, Saint Theresa (Mother Theresa of Calcutta), Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, the founder of the "Sisters of Charity," and of course, Saint Sebastian, the Patron Saint of Sports, martyred during the persecution of Christians by the Roman Emperor Diocletian. The Patron Saint of my ancestors (the Scotts), Saint Andrew, the brother of Saint Peter, would also be represented as well as the favorite, Saint Francis of Assisi.

These saints are a much more prevalent presence in the Catholic tradition than in our own Protestant world. But, being in their midst over the past 15 years as the sole Protestant teacher in a Catholic environment, I found these saints to be human, just like us; the biggest difference being their unwavering resolve to follow Our Lord and Savior above all else, no matter what. Were they brave? Yes! Were they passionate? Yes! Were they consistent? Yes! Were they better people than any of us? No.

We, too, are called by God to be saints. We will not necessarily be recognized for our efforts, certainly not canonized (unless someone out there is planning to convert to Catholicism and do some really noticeable things with the rest of your life...). We are called to love the Lord or God with all our hearts, souls, and minds and to love our neighbors as ourselves- all day, every day, to the best of our abilities, with God's help and God's Grace. Bring it on-Amen!

Welcome to sainthood!
Debbie Newhouse