

To Become Saints: The Journey of Faith

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We often hear about the phrase “journey of faith.” The journey of faith is simply the walk that all of us, individually and as a church, are making towards sainthood, for we are all called to become saints.

In a general sense, a saint is anyone who is in a state of grace. And so, whenever we go to Confession and receive the Eucharist we are in a state of grace, and our journey of faith is strengthened. In the strict sense, a saint refers to those who by their heroic virtue during their lifetime are recognized by the Church through canonization (canonization is the celebration where the Pope on behalf of the entire Church officially declares someone a saint). The recognition indicates that such a person is in heaven and we can ask them to intercede for us before God, since their virtues and death are an example and witness to Christians.

This week, one of the saints we will celebrate is Saint Mary Magdalene. We rejoice because she is an example for us of what witnessing to Christ truly means.

Although there is no precise, comprehensive information about her life, from what we learn in the Gospels, Mary Magdalene is a model of a sinner who became a saint. St. Luke’s Gospel tells us that she is the woman from whom seven demons were expelled (Lk 8:2). She is also seen as the sinful woman who interrupted a Pharisee’s banquet with an alabaster jar of ointment and anointed the feet of Jesus, a gesture to which Jesus responded: “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much” (Lk 7:47). Also, some refer to her as the woman caught in the act of adultery in the Gospel of John 8:1-11 to whom Jesus said: “Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more.” However, we know with certainty from the Gospels that Mary Magdalene is the very first person to witness the Resurrection of Jesus and proclaim it to whole world, beginning with the apostles.

What does her life teach us today? Mary Magdalene died to sin, to her past, and then rose to new life in Christ. She not only witnessed the Resurrection, but also experienced in her life what it means to resurrect in Christ. She not only knew that Jesus alone could transform lives but believed in it. Despite her past, she continued to seek Christ even to his death. She gave her life and difficulties to Christ. She opened her heart to Jesus and never turned back.

My dear friends, our journey toward sainthood calls us to build a relationship with God and with one another. We can do so by growing in virtue. The virtues of patience, unconditional love, forgiveness, treating one another with respect and dignity, using our words to uplift others, constantly praying for loved ones. Through these virtues we die to self in order to give life to others. We die with Christ and rise with him.

Through the intercession of Saint Mary Magdalene and all the saints, may God strengthen you in your journey of faith.

*--Fr. Anthony Ahamefule
Parish Priest*

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Last Wednesday we had our first Knights of Columbus meeting, and it was very positive. The information shared and discussed was well received by those who attended. Many of our parishioners indicated interest in becoming Knights, not only because of the fraternity and support of the members but also because it is an organization that supports family life and will be another avenue of service, not only to our parishes but also to the entire Bandon and Port Orford communities. It is wonderful benefit to have a local council in our parish and strengthens our evangelization efforts. We have more than 20 members now, and I invite all men to consider becoming a Knight.