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## Living Lives of Faith (Holiness)

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### Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Each year on November 1st, The Roman Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of All Saints and encourages us to reflect on men and women of all ages who are models of holiness and heroes in the faith."

## **Living Lives of Faith (Holiness)**

Each year on November 1<sup>st</sup>, The Roman Catholic Church celebrates the Feast of All Saints and encourages us to reflect on men and women of all ages who are models of holiness and heroes in the faith.

As Director of Pastoral Care at St. Ann's Community, a long-term care facility, my life is enriched by residents who are inspirations and models of holiness. These individuals have lived out the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love (charity).

Although they may never experience the Church's formal process of beatification and canonization and they may never receive the title of Saint, they are people who put into practice these theological virtues everyday. Here are their stories...

### **Persons of Faith**

I am blessed to know a husband and wife who are both over 90 years old and have been married almost 70 years. They met at a parish dance and have been in love ever since. This couple has eight children, twenty four grandchildren, fifteen great grand children and a few great-great grandchildren.

During the Great Depression, they had faith in each other to take on the responsibilities of married life and had faith in the Lord to accept children from God. They sacrificed to provide a Catholic grammar school, high school and college education for all eight children and because of their great faith in the Lord and in other people, they have been rewarded by having had the opportunity to see and enjoy their children's children.

Their faith in themselves, in their family, their country, and their Church has been tested and challenged over and over again. They have grown stronger in their faith and the covenant that God made with them.

Would you call this couple Saints? Possibly, for this couple certainly has been an inspiration in the ways of holiness for scores of people. For as we hear in Sacred Scripture: "Well done good and faithful servant – because you have been faithful in small matters, I will set you over greater matters."

### **Person of Hope**

Luke's Gospel 2:36-37, talks about the 84 year old widow Anna and portrays her as a woman who has known sorrow but has not lost hope in her God. She never left the Temple but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer.

At St. Ann's Home, there is a woman that is very much like Anna. This woman is over 90 years old and has known loss and sorrow but remains a woman of hope. She is the last of her seven siblings and her mother and father have both entered into Eternal Life. She has also experienced the death of her husband and one of her three sons who was

killed in the Korean War. Through this loss, her belief in Christ's Resurrection and the promise of our own resurrection – she has remained a woman of Hope.

It would have been easier for her to be bitter, feel hopeless and without life – instead she has remained a woman of Hope. Hope in the Lord's Resurrection and the promise of Resurrection and new life for the faithful person. Even in her losses, she courageously proclaims the prayer: "Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Would you call this woman a Saint? Possibly! For those who live near her, they do consider her a modern day Saint because of her strong faith, hope and fortitude.

### **Persons of Love (Charity)**

The last couple is in their 80's. They married when they were in their 20's but were unable to have children. After receiving this very sad information, they chose to give their time (outside of their professional careers) to the works of love and charity. They volunteered to serve on the disasters services committee of the American Red Cross, assist in building homes with Habitat for Humanity, volunteered in a parish soup kitchens, literacy program, tutoring programs for poor children and served with a community organization for stabilizing and improving their neighborhood.

This couple has given generous financial gifts to a variety of programs and agencies serving the poor and needy of our community. They have been selfless using their gifts of time, talent and treasure for the good of others. This couple has certainly lived out the Lord's command: "love your neighbor as yourself". Day in and day out their hearts are filled with love and charity for others.

Would you call this couple Saints? Possibly! While they may never be canonized as Saints by the Church, the people whose lives they've touched have known them as filled with love and generosity and even call them their friendly Saint.

These five individuals are performing the Lord's work with great care and compassion to needy brothers and sisters. They exude holiness and saintly characteristics and have improved our world by their presence. These people, like others we know have made the United States strong, have shared values and virtues in forming their families and have had personal contact with the Lord through their lives of prayer. They are inspirations to countless people whose lives they have touched. They are certainly holy and saintly people! Can we as future generations become saintly people and a source of inspiration for others as these individuals have been for us?

**Rev. Peter T. Bayer**

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