



Bringing Home the Word



All Saints' Day
November 1, 2015

How Blessed We Are

By Diane M. Houdek

Today we celebrate All Saints' Day. Our belief in "the communion of saints" distinguishes us as Catholics (not to be confused with just-canonized saints, see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 946–948, 953). The ongoing intercession of the holy men and women who have gone before us is a source of inspiration. We look to patron saints who mirror our own lives and concerns. Today, however, we remember the Church Triumphant who now dwell in God's presence. It's fitting, then, that the Gospel reading sums up the many ways in which Jesus calls us to be holy.

Surely these witnesses have lived the beatitudes to the full.

Saints, first and foremost, know their need for God. If we don't know real need, we can't know real satisfaction. Until we've been seriously ill, we don't know the wonder of recovery, of feeling strength return to our bodies and/or joy return to our souls. If we've never gone without three regular meals, clean water, or electricity, we take them for granted. If we've never lost someone dear to us, we may not appreciate the everyday presence of loved ones who remain near.

Take some time this week to reflect on the beatitudes. At different times and in various circumstances, one or more of them have been relevant to our lives. Strive to recognize the neediness of others, especially those most vulnerable. This is what the saints have done. Jesus tells his followers that they will be blessed in the very midst of their need. He speaks these words to us as well. †

A Word From Pope Francis

The Beatitudes of Jesus... present a model of happiness contrary to what is usually communicated



by the media and by the prevailing wisdom....What is glorified is success at any cost, affluence, the arrogance of power and self-affirmation at the expense of others....

This is the great challenge of faith. Jesus was not afraid to ask his disciples if they truly wanted to follow him or if they preferred to take another path (see John 6:67)....If you too are able to say "yes" to Jesus, your lives will become both meaningful and fruitful.

—Message for the 29th World Youth Day, January 21, 2014

Sunday Readings

Revelation 7:2–4, 9–14

"I had a vision of a great multitude... wearing white robes and holding palm branches."

1 John 3:1–3

"We are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed."

Matthew 5:1–12

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."



Most days I don't feel "blessed," Lord. Help me to see your constant presence and mercy, and to see the other "blessed" ones supporting me. May I encourage others in their goodness. Amen.

Blessed Luigi and Maria: A Model for Married Couples

By Norman J. Muckerman, CSsR

I'd like to focus on one particular couple whose feast day is celebrated on November 25, the anniversary of their wedding. On October 21, 2001, Pope John Paul II officially declared them blessed. In fact, they are the *first* married couple in Church history to be beatified together. Their names are Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi.

Luigi was born on January 12, 1880, in Catania, a thriving harbor city on Sicily's southeastern shore. Luigi was good, intelligent, and studious, and in due time he earned a degree in law. He had no difficulty finding top-grade positions, and in 1946 he retired as the honorary deputy attorney general of Italy. His was a good and satisfying life, made even better by the love he shared with his wife.

Maria Corsini was born on June 24, 1884, in Florence. Hers was a noble family, and as a child she became deeply involved in the arts and culture. Like Luigi, Maria received a solid education, and she emerged from her university training as a full-time professor. Later in life, she published a dozen or more books on spirituality and family life.

Luigi and Maria were married on November 25, 1905, in Rome. In time they were blessed with four children: Filippo, Stefania, Cesare, and Enrichetta. During that fourth and last pregnancy, the situation was so difficult and dangerous that Maria's doctors advised



REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- What virtue does your favorite saint exemplify?
- What beatitude do you find difficult to practice?

her to have an abortion. She would have only a 5 percent chance of surviving if she carried the child to term, they said.

Maria and Luigi decided to trust in the Lord, praying all the harder that God would let both mother and baby live. God heard their prayers, and eighty-seven years later, Enrichetta was present at her parents' beatification along with her two brothers.

According to the Quattrocchi children, their family life was full of faith and fun, and an atmosphere of serenity and peace was always present. From the start Maria and Luigi cultivated a shared spiritual life. They dedicated their marriage to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and attended daily Mass together. The family prayed the rosary every evening and observed important feasts with vigils and special prayers. Their home became a center for religion classes, and they started a youth troop for neighborhood youngsters. Adults from the area frequented the home both for advice and to hear lectures from prominent theologians. During World War II, their home served as a hideout for refugees and persecuted persons. This kind of living and loving must have influenced the children to seek peace and prayer in their own adult lives, because three of the four chose to enter some form of religious life.

In 1951, Luigi suffered a heart attack and died at home. He was seventy-one. Fourteen years later, Maria followed him into the kingdom. She died of natural causes in the arms of her daughter, Enrichetta. Joined in matrimony for almost fifty years, it is no wonder John Paul II, in their beatification homily, declared: "The blessed couple lived an ordinary life in an extraordinary way. Among the joys and anxieties of a normal family, they knew how to live an extraordinarily rich spiritual life."

When spouses encounter personal problems, questions in dealing with their marriage or their children's troubles, it would seem right and good to enlist the help of these designated heavenly helpers.

WEEKDAY READINGS

November 2-7

Mon. *All Souls' Day: Wisdom 3:1-9 / Romans 5:5-11 / or 6:3-9 / John 6:37-40*

Tue. *Weekday: Romans 12:5-16 / Luke 14:15-24*

Wed. *St. Charles Borromeo: Romans 13:8-10 / Luke 14:25-33*

Thu. *Weekday: Romans 14:7-12 / Luke 15:1-10*

Fri. *Weekday: Romans 15:14-21 / Luke 16:1-8*

Sat. *Weekday: Romans 16:3-9, 16, 22-27 / Luke 16:9-15*