

SAID ED October 27, 2013

On being "perfect"

This week (on Friday) we have the Feast of All Saints! We are going to celebrate the feast of All the Saints in a special way this year. Our Mass at 5:30pm will be followed by a pizza supper served by the Saints of our parish! Staff members are dressing up as their favorite Saint and after supper will have a parade of the saints through our Great Hall. We are planning activities for the whole family! We expect that it will be over by 8:00pm and since it is on a Friday night we hope that many families will come. We want to have enough food and treats for everyone, so please put in your reservation by Wednesday.

It's a way to have some fun and celebrate the saints - great and small - of our tradition. Incidentally, dressing up as the saints is the origin of our Halloween – "All Hallows Eve"! Please do consider coming.

Autumn is the season of dying. We watch around us as leaves fall from the trees. It's a time that reminds us that life is a series of deaths and resurrections; dying and risings.

It's also a reminder that it is not just the things around us that fade and die away, it's also true of our network of relationships and friendships. These also change and mature and deepen and sometimes even die before they can be transformed. Many years ago I asked a friend the simple question, "How do you learn how to love"? His immediate and straight forward response took me aback: "Usually by failing!" What a lesson in life that is. We do in fact, learn how to love more deeply by failing to; by watching the effect of our faults upon others; the hurts that are inflicted and the pain that so often results. These are all ways in which we experience death and resurrection.

Fr. Richard Rohr says that we grow spiritually much more by doing it wrong than by doing it right. That might just be the central message of how spiritual growth happens, yet nothing in us wants to believe it.

If there is such a thing as human perfection, it seems to emerge precisely from how we handle the imperfection that is everywhere, especially our own. What a clever place for God to hide holiness, so that only the humble and earnest will find it! A "perfect" person ends up being one who can consciously forgive and include imperfection rather than one who thinks he or she is totally above and beyond imperfection.

It becomes sort of obvious once you say it out loud. In fact, I would say that the demand for the perfect is the greatest enemy of the good. Perfection is a mathematical or divine concept; goodness is a beautiful human concept that includes us all. People whom we call "good people" are always people who have learned how to include contradictions and others, even at risk to their own proper self-image or their social standing. This is quite obvious in Jesus.

Have a great week!!
