

**Homily for the Solemnity of All Saints Day**  
**Bishop Kenny High School**  
**by Bishop Felipe J. Estevez**  
**November 1, 2019**

Let me be perfectly clear to you, today's liturgy we are not applauding the New Orleans Saints, but the holy, virtuous charitable people who excel in holiness of life. Who is a saint? I find that Mary of Nazareth, the Mother of Jesus Christ, said it perfectly, "The Lord has done great things for me, holy is His name."

A saint is God's doing in our lives. Today we do not look at the saints... praising their charity and sacrifices, but rather how God takes very normal people, sinful people, flawed human beings, full of imperfections and does something beautiful, something great with them.

To test that you get this message right is when you say to yourself, "I could be a saint!" Sainthood is possible for a teen, for a teacher, for a staff member, for a parent right here and now at Bishop Kenny High School.

On Nov. 1, the entire universal church celebrates all the saints known, such as St. John Henry Newman, and all those unknown such as the 85 Martyrs of La Florida whose stories are not that well known, even by Floridian Catholics.

I know that when you think of saints you immediately think of Mother Theresa, St. John Paul the Great, St. Augustine our beloved patron, St. Therese of Lisieux – the little flower, but today we also include those unknown saints whose stories could be somewhat like these:

- A teen from her community who goes as far away as Ethiopia to care for children on the streets, providing shelter for them;
- A high school teen who is a tennis star and yet finds time to pray three rosaries a day for he loves Mary with a passion, pure love;
- A wealthy prestigious lawyer who renounces a perfect job on Wall Street and a most comfortable life and beautiful marriage to represent prisoners on death row who might be innocent and need someone to plead their cause;
- A divorced woman who knowing that her ex-husband has cancer and does not have anyone to accompany him and she returns simply to care for him in his old age;
- A bishop who gives his private phone number away to everyone who is sick, ready to go at any time during the day or night and care for them;
- And, a student who gets the worst type of cancer and never complains, who smiles all the time and his amazing submission to the will of God converts his own doctor to the faith.

All these stories are true stories I have witnessed in my life. There are many saints, even in our own Diocese of St. Augustine. In this Eucharist I put their names on the paten of the Mass in celebration.

Holiness is the work of God in us, sometimes in spite of ourselves. That is why good deeds in reality come from the Lord, who inspires us to do them, and gives us the strength, the capacity to do them in spite of our fears, even of our human reluctance. That is why when we are generous we are simply sharing God's gifts, God's blessings with others.

The Holy Spirit's presence in our lives is what makes us holy. We simply need to say, often, "Come Holy Spirit, breathe in me."

The signs of the Holy Spirit in our lives may be a thirst to pray unceasingly, or a desire to be a friend of Jesus, or a passion for the care of the needy in our midst, or a desire to serve others all the time. It may be someone with a rare sensitivity, an ongoing sensitivity for those who are not loved, those in the margins, forgotten ones, such as Mother Drexel for Blacks and Indians in our country; or Mother Theresa for the people in the slums; or Mother Cabrini in New York and Chicago caring for the immigrants; or Father Damien caring for the lepers; or Saint Padre Pio welcoming the sinners.

The French writer Georges Bernanos once said, "There is only one suffering. It is the suffering of not being a saint."

Join me in a Prayer of St. Augustine:

*Breathe in me O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.*

*Act in me O Holy Spirit that my work, too, may be holy.*

*Draw my heart O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.*

*Strengthen me O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.*

*Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.*

*Amen.*