

Remembering the Saints



November is an interesting month in the life of the church—as we continue to watch leaves fall off the trees and feel cold air begin to creep in, our life in community also reflects the themes of change, death, and new life. As the church year comes to an end we once again prepare for the beginning of Advent, a season that reminds us of God’s promises of light and new life for the whole world in the midst of days that are shorter and nights that are longer. As we anticipate the end of the church year, my favorite part of this month is All Saints Day, which falls on the first Sunday of November.

All Saints Day is a festival with so many beautiful aspects. First, it is an opportunity to remember that as the church on Earth we are only a small part of a much bigger community of the baptized—when we consider those who have died and rest with God (and participate in the life of the church in a different way now), the church on Earth is only a tiny sliver of a much bigger church body. All Saints Day is also a chance to celebrate Christ’s victory over death, to remember that the promises of grace and new life made in baptism last *forever* and don’t ever expire, to give thanks for the lives of all those who have gone before us and completed their baptismal journeys, and to find amusement in some great stories about saints.

If you ever stop by my office to say hello, you might notice that I have a picture of St. Elizabeth of Hungary next to my computer. Elizabeth of Hungary was the daughter of a king, was married for a short time to a German noble, and after her husband’s death sacrificed her position and wealth to join a laypersons’ religious order and to build a hospice for the poor and sick. I love Elizabeth of Hungary because in her life of service to others she often faced ridicule from her rich and powerful colleagues, who thought her service was wasteful and silly. Yet Elizabeth continued to live in service to others, regardless of the opinions of others (even her husband). A famous story about Elizabeth says that one day when she was carrying loaves of bread to feed the hungry, her husband met her on the road and tried to stop her. The bread miraculously turned into roses, which convinced Elizabeth’s husband of the worthiness of her actions. In the picture on my desk, Elizabeth is holding bread and roses.

Ultimately, because Christ has redeemed us and because of the promises that we have received in baptism, we will all be considered saints by God in the fullness of time. The stories of all the saints are a way for us to remember that God’s abiding promises of love, grace, and redemption are for real, broken people, and that God’s love will never fail us.

Peace,
Pastor Marissa Becklin