

selfish desires, from all of those inner struggles that take place behind the closed doors of our lives, from all of those things which go to make the center of what we call our ego.

HOW DOES ONE GO ABOUT DOING THIS? You ask: how does one go about doing this? Perhaps these "giants" of the faith have something to say to us in this regard, perhaps we can find a clue by looking at their lives.

Their lives confirm this observation - and here we come to the heart of this meditation - that the only time people ever lose themselves completely is when they become completely absorbed by something or someone else. In their case, their lives were so completely absorbed by Christ, by His teachings, His way of doing things, so completely absorbed by the power of His personality and the activity of His spirit in our world that they forgot themselves. They began to think about the lives of others. Into their lives came this amazing capacity to really love, to care, to be concerned about others. Love, for them, was not just a noun, but a verb - something you do.

And perhaps as they lost themselves in Him some rather strange things began to happen in their own lives. I'm sure their fears and anxieties disappeared. Their pride, their vanity, their hollowness was lost. And this, too. I'm sure they began to lose some of their critical nature, their little jealousies, their petty animosities, their impatience with others. Maybe they lost some of their illnesses, too. In losing themselves in Him, they found themselves.

As they lost themselves in Him, they came to find a wonderful freedom which enabled them to move at ease in the world - with grace and confidence - because they were no longer concerned with themselves and afraid of what might happen to them.

Several years ago, after a similar meditation on All Saints' Sunday, a gentleman in our parish by the name of William Logan (some of you may remember him) sent me a little card. Apparently he picked it up in St. Patrick's where his wife attended. Entitled, "Why Were the Saints, Saints?" it reads as follows:

"Why were the saints, saints? Because they were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful, patient when it was difficult to be patient; and because they pushed on when they wanted to stand still, and kept silent when they wanted to talk, and were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable. That was all. It was quite simple and always will be!"

Isn't that beautiful. ~~I think it just about sums it up for us.~~

AN APPEAL One additional comment ~~here at the end of this meditation~~ before we share together in the Sacrament. The world today is just crying out for more and more of these "giants", these "saints" of the Christian life, pleading for people who have lost themselves in something greater than themselves, namely this love of God which we experience in the person of Jesus of Nazareth - so that they can bring that renewing and healing touch into the poisoned areas of life where person is often pitted against person, race against race, nation against nation.

Ever since my college days when I was introduced to the life of Francis of Assisi, I have had an affection for St. Francis. As a matter of fact, one of the regrets of my life is that I didn't get to walk around Assisi when I was in Italy back in my student days. My wife did, however. We were both single back there in the Summer of 1954 and I think she had a bit more money to spend than I had. Mine was running low after several days of sight-seeing in Florence and eating pizza in Rome. But our mutual fondness for Francis of Assisi was one more of a number of wonderful things that brought us together that Summer in Europe.

Not many of you know this, but Phyllis Westermann of our parish has some rare and beautiful talent as a sculptor. To me, one of her magnificent creations is a moving statue of St. Francis which is now in a garden in New Canaan, Connecticut. The calm, gentle beauty of Francis through which shines his strength, his love, his humanity are uniquely captured in this piece of sculpture. We weren't able to bring the three and a half foot work down for you to see it, but the original from which it is made graces the coffee hour table this morning. It's the center piece. I hope you'll pause to look at it. When I asked Phyllis if we might borrow it for today, she remarked with that wonderful sense of humor, "Why I suppose so...but, Phil, remember it's no chocolate rabbit..." Her own creation.

All Saints' Sunday. This is the day when we honor those whose lives have been touched by the life of Christ. They have gone from our midst, but their beauty and influence is still felt. They say to us:

"I have fought the good fight; I have
finished the course. I have kept the
faith".

Remember them and how they witnessed to the reality of God and the love of Christ in their lives. Remember them, yes, and then take up your fight and go on - in faith, trusting in the ways of God. Our closing prayer is that beautiful prayer of Francis of Assisi. Let us pray:

"Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console.
To be understood as to understand.
To be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to Eternal
life".