

How do you see the Saints?

The month of November is rich with feasts of many Saints. In it, there are feasts for St. Mark, St. George, St. Mina, St. John Chrysostom, and many other Saints. Amidst all these festivities, celebrations, and the wonderful accompanying revivals, there is an important question: **How do we see Saints and how do we perceive them!?**

The answer to this question will reveal to us how to benefit from them.

Do we perceive Saints as lapses of history? Flickers of light which are difficult to reoccur in this dark world? Or, are they heroes who performed supernatural acts therefore the church placed them before us so we call upon their miracles in our lives and make vows in order to achieve some materialistic requests? Were their supernatural abilities the reason for their fame and heroism? Or are they ordinary people who responded in faith to the work of God's grace in their lives and made every effort in vigilance and patience until they overcame the world and grew in sainthood? And if this is true, is the road to become saints is open to us as well?

Let's read together what was written by departed Fr. Bishoy Kamel, one of the great fathers of the church in the twentieth century...How did he see them, how did he make friendship with them, and how he learned from them! How did he explore their mysteries and how he searched in their inner motives which controlled their conduct and the manners by which they faced the world! For instance, in his view of the great martyr St. George, he wrote the following:

[+ St. George is a young man...Martyred in the name of Christ Jesus...Martyred to his love and the love of chastity and purity...

+ Martyrdom is a powerful expression of the nature of Christians, for God loved mankind to the cross, to death. The martyr is a Christian who loved Christ to death, he struggles against oneself to death thus he dies to oneself and struggles against the world thus dies to the world. **"For Your sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."** (Rom 8)

+ When the Christian detests sin, he abandons it to death. No yielding in his life because he doesn't have half-solutions. Rather he places in his heart to die for Jesus and carries in his flesh, at all times, the death of the Lord Jesus... **"For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body."** (2Cor 5:10-11)... Thus God is more glorified in our weakness than in our strength and more in our death than in our life in the flesh.

+ Since this young man saw his father shedding his own blood for the sake of his savior, he too loved the cross and sought it with all his heart. He longed for his own blood to be shed with he who was crucified on the cross for his sake...

+ St. George is a young man who recognized how to offer his youth on the altar of purity in Christ Jesus... In prison, the emperor sent him one of the beautiful concubines of the palace hoping that she may tempt him with her beauty and make him to fall with her. But St. George knew how to turn the prison into a sanctuary of purity where prayers are raised, not only for his own sake, but also for the salvation of this poor woman. The morning did dawn before she came forward asking him in tears to show her the mystery of the life of purity and holiness which she came in contact with in his life. He preached to her about Jesus as a fountain of purity, and instead of her coming to seduce him with the magic of her debauchery, he attracted her with the magic of his purity...!]

Abouna Bishoy Kamel also wrote about St. Mina the wonder maker:

[The relationship of St. Mina with the Lord Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is a love relationship... He prays because he loves to talk to his friend, and the Lord Jesus rejoices with him... He fasts and scrimps in earthly pleasures because of the depth of pleasure in living with the divine... He detests the world out of his affection to his everlasting friend... He reads the Bible not to study it or out of duty, but out of hunger for the words of the beloved friend... He keeps his chastity not out of deprivation or it being a goal per se, but out of being in love with the beloved, because he who unites himself with a woman is one with her in the flesh. But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in the spirit (1Cor 6)... This is the way of love in the lives of the saints ...!]

Thus we can see the saints...They are the family that we belong to...They are the clouds of witnesses surrounding us, overshadowing us, encouraging us, and prays for us...They are our role models in their faith, their perseverance, their devotion, their purity, and their love of Christ .. They are fine model for those who are walking in the path of the kingdom of heaven...!

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