

Sunday, July 29, 2012

Characteristics in the Lives of the Saints (2)

We continue our topic about the most important characteristics of the lives of saints so we can measure ourselves and follow them as models.

1- A Saint is one who lives the Gospel.

2- A Saint is one who lets the Holy Spirit lead his life.

3- A Saint is one who seeks blessing.

All saints appreciate the divine blessing and strive to the best of their abilities to attain it. They search for it and keen on always getting more of it, they seek it in listening to the word of God and enjoying the church sacraments. They are keen on getting it by lending a helping hand to others and toiling in serving God.

Some find it in the calmness, solitude, and deep prayers, some find it in taking care of the poor, the sick, and those who suffer, and some find it having a relationship with the saints and studying their stories and their experiences, while others find it in spiritual discipleship with a humble heart and drinking from the spiritual teachings.

Saints always recognize that they are poor and in constant need of the divine blessing. Jacob strived a long night, insisting on obtaining the blessing from God (Genesis 32). The Shunammite woman was keen on taking the blessing of Elisha, the man of God. She hosted him, served him, and learned from his teachings (2 Malachi 4). Mary, Martha, and Lazarus sought after the blessing by inviting the Lord Jesus to their house. Thus, their home became a blessed center for ministry in their village, Bethany. Mary was the most thirsty among all of them, so she used to sit at the feet of the Lord and listen to his life-giving words (Luke 10).

Saints always seek the blessing of the Lord in their lives, to bless their work, their words and their children. They ask for this blessing for everyone, thus they become a blessing to their generation and many generations to come.

4. A saint is one who is not naive or superficial in knowing the bible.

There is no Saint in the history of the church who was ignorant of the Bible or had trivial spiritual thoughts. The word of God is light, how does a person reach his goal without light? how could he keep his feet from deviating or slipping without the support of the word? Or how would he be internally satisfied and filled if he is superficial in relating to the word of God?

Saints understand the Bible profoundly. They know it, live by it, and preach it by showing it actions before words. They recognize that the lack of knowledge of the Bible can be used by the devil to destroy humankind "*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.*" (Hosea 4:6), as Saint Cletet of Alexandria says:

"Lack of knowledge is a grave sin."

Therefore, any tendency to make spiritual knowledge superficial or not go into spiritual depth using the pretense of simplicity and avoiding difficulties is a dangerous invitation to lack of knowledge and naivety. This leads man to be lost in his spiritual life and causes him grave harm.

As to the stories we hear about some simple people who were saints who perform miracles without even knowing the Lord's Prayer, they are fables and fictitious stories that need to be revised in the church teaching. Being simple does not mean being superficial, trivial, or naive but rather it means being smooth and not being complicate. Additionally, Simplicity should be accompanied by wisdom, "*Be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.*" (Matthew 10:16). The source of wisdom is studying the word of God profoundly and keeping it in a good heart, "*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another.*" (Colossians 3:16).

Even in the cases that may appear to us as example of naivety like Abouna Abd El-Massih El-Maqqari El-Manahri (Departed in 1963) or Abouna Yustus St. Anthony (Departed 1975) and others. Those were not ignorant but they had a deep level of biblical understanding, they were very precise in keeping the commandment, and experts in the spiritual strife. They hid all this behind a facade of naivety and ignorance to guard themselves from vain glory. In any case, this approach is a rare one in the history of the church.

We are all invited to study both the old and the new Testaments of the Bible because it is essential to building our souls in Christ Jesus, without this we would be like the one who built his house on the sand.

We will continue this topic next article by the grace of the Lord.

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