

Every year on this feast of All Saints, and many times throughout the year as we celebrate the feast days of individual saints (like Simon and Jude of last week) – I am reminded of a presentation given by Steve Aggrisono. Steve is a musician and is a popular presenter at youth gatherings such as the National Catholic Youth conference.

Steve's presentation the day I heard him was on the saints – and he started out by asking everyone who wanted to be a saint to raise their hand. . . Now he was talking to mostly young people – and young people, and maybe even a few of us –

have this notion that saints are kind of these nerdy goody-goody people, who drive everyone up the wall with their self-righteousness – always pointing out the mistakes of others, go to Church every day, praying all the time, and certainly not having any fun. . . so we would all think, ew – who wants to be like that? So not many people raised their hands. . .

Steve then went on to say, you know the definition of a saint – is simply someone who is living for all eternity with God in heaven – and after our death, if we aren't living for all eternity with God in heaven – there is only one other place we can be . . . and who wants to be there??

So, Steve said, let me ask that question again: anyone who wants to be a saint – raise their hands. . . an of course this time – every hand went up. . .

So now, after sharing that memory --- if I asked right here, right now – who wants to be saint ---- hopefully we would all raise our hands – right??

But wanting to be a saint – is not the same as actually being a saint. . . To be a saint, we need to synch our wants, needs, and desires up with God's wants, needs, and desires for us. In other words, we need to turn our lives over to God – and live life the way God wants us to – not the way we want to. . .

But even that might be easier than what we think it is – because it doesn't mean we have to go out and do all kinds of extraordinary things – but rather, as St. Theresa of Calcutta, Mother Theresa would say: we must do very ordinary things with extraordinary love. . .

To help us wrap our minds and hearts around that, I propose to you some very ordinary ways to live out the Beatitudes, with extraordinary love. . .

Some of these include:

Blessed are the single moms who do the best for their kids every day, for there is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are the folks who work three jobs and still can't make ends meet, for they shall inherit the land.

Blessed are workers who have been downsized, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the generous people who offer friendly help to neighbors, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the dear, fragile elderly who show up for Mass whenever they can, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who aren't beautiful or successful or rich, for they shall inherit the land.

Blessed are those who have recently lost loved ones, who feel a part of them has died, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are those who reach out to those in pain, those who don't have enough to eat or a place to lay their heads, for they shall be shown mercy.

Blessed are people who have big dreams but larger fears that paralyze them, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who get overlooked in well-intentioned litanies like this, for they shall see God!

I think you get the point. Doing great things is not what makes one a saint – it is those who do very ordinary things with extraordinary love who are saints.

May we be in their number, when the saints go marching in.