

## **Message from Our Regional Spiritual Assistant**

Celebrations of All Saints and All Souls are a great reminder for all of us that our life does not end on Earth but in Heaven, to Eternal life.

All Saints from the Triumphant Church (Heavenly Church). But they just did not reach there, as born humans, they had to pass through this world. They were not born as super humans but they had their share of joys and sorrows, achievements and struggles, and virtues and vices. Saints of the triumphant church had set their goal to be with God in His Kingdom. They pursued their goal with determination, dedication and discipline. Saints have lived the Gospel of our Lord, followed the spirituality of the Master. So, no Christian needs to despair in life, as long as there is life there is HOPE. When we look at the gallery of the saints, we see all sorts of people who have conquered themselves by the grace of God. Some have honored God from the beginning of their lives, others turned toward God in their midlife, and still others before their death. Some have been great and wretched sinners, while others were moderately sinful. So, saints are not just for admiration but imitation.

All Souls from the Penitent Church (Suffering Church). We remember to pray to all the departed souls gone before us, and especially those souls in purgatory still in need of purification. Death is not the end but rather the beginning of eternal life. Our prayer is a great support for the souls to attain purification and complete their journey to God. Of-course we pray for the departed souls related to our family and friends but it's also our duty to pray for those souls who have been forgotten and no one to pray for.

All of us form the Militant Church (Pilgrim Church). We are all pilgrims and strangers making our journey to Heaven. As soldiers of the militant church, we have to fight the spiritual battle, battle against sin all through the journey. We all have blessings and struggles. The Church has given us sacraments as the help for our journey. We as Franciscans have fraternity, help from our brothers and sisters on this journey. Being humble to receive the help and support from the church and each other, we will be able to fight a good fight all along the journey.

There are many living saints among us. We have to just look around and we may be surprised to see a saint sitting or walking beside us. Recently, I had the opportunity for an in person pastoral visit to five fraternities of the Secular Franciscans in Northern Alberta. For sure, I was among the saints who live the Gospel of our Lord as best as they can and follow the spirituality of St. Francis of Assisi. Whether living in the farmland or in the city, whether young or old, I witnessed a great love for the Franciscan charism and mission among them. Of-course we are also saints in making, which requires us to work more consciously to improve our Human, Christian and Franciscan vocation. And we all can do it with the help of each other. Let us not just dream to get to heaven alone. A Christian is called to take the other along to Heaven. Let us be encouraged to live like the Saints who intercede for us that we will be with them one day enjoying the heavenly bliss as they do.

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