

GATHERED INSPIRED SENT



CALLED TO SERVE

ORDER OF FRIAR SERVANTS OF MARY
Vocation Newsletter



The month of November is traditionally when we remember all the saints and holy souls of our lives. We begin the month celebrating the great solemnity of All Saints, followed by the feast of All Souls. These feasts remind us of the cloud of witnesses who surround our lives. Some are those canonized by the Church and others are those who are our personal saints: family members, friends, and mentors who have gone before us into the promised land of heaven. Unfortunately, many of us have forgotten the blessing of what devotion to the saints can mean for our lives. Having a devotion to a saint is the opportunity to learn how to grow in virtue and holiness by imitating the life of the saint. Likewise, the lives of the Saints give us an opportunity to realize that growing in holiness is possible if we choose to live each day by the dictates of the gospel: to love God with all our heart, mind, and soul, and to love our neighbors and ourselves. All of the saints are given to us by the Church to remind us that the holiness is possible if we follow the gospel just as Jesus commands. For those discerning the call of the Lord, the Saints

offer wonderful insights into how to respond to the Lord's call.

The honor roll of saints contains ordinary people who lived extraordinary lives by God's grace. Some saints were married and some single; some were parents and godparents; some mourned the passing of children and others the passing of spouses. The saints include popes, bishops, friars, virgins, young people and children. Other saints were housewives, doctors, teachers and professionals. The saints are of all ages, backgrounds and temperaments. It can be said that most every person can find one saint who shares their personality. One of my favorite saints who inspires me at this point in my life is St. Philip Benizi.

St. Philip Benizi was one of the early members of the Servite Order. He was a learned man, a priest and a Prior General of the Order. Throughout St. Philip's life, he nurtured a deep devotion to Our Lady. Mary was a constant presence in the saint's life in which she inspired St. Philip in two important ministries of his consecrated life: prayer and compassion. St. Philip was man of deep prayer. The



legends of the saint's life relate that he spent many moments of the day in prayer. I am sure that in prayer St. Philip was constantly discerning the call of the Lord for his life and ministries. As a disciple of Jesus, he discerned how to become a more perfect disciple of Jesus. As a friar, St. Philip discerned how to better serve his brothers in the community. As the prior general, he discerned how to care for the brothers. His companion in prayer was Blessed Mary from whom he learned how to cultivate the silence to welcome and dialogue with the Lord's word revealed in prayer; how to courageously surrender to

saints are examples of growing in holiness, how to pray and how to compassionately serve others. Likewise, these holy women and men teach that discernment in the way that Christians clarify and listen clearly to the Lord's call for one's life. Ultimately the lives of the Saints are an example of courageous response to the Lord to go where he leads. God is always speaking to us. He is always calling us to compassionate service. God is always loving us. Like the saints, we need to make time to listen to the Lord's call and pray for the courage to authentically respond to this call.

Reflection Questions:

1. Who is your favorite saint? What does the saint teach you about God; about holiness; about following the Lord?
2. Can I be courageous as the saint in following the Lord? Why/Why not? What are my hesitations in following the Lord's call?

God and how to be compassionate with whom he met. St. Philip Benizi is a saint not so much because the Church says he is, but more so because St. Philip grew in holiness by constantly discerning the call of the Lord in His life. His devotion to Our Lady inspired him to grow in holiness, to love God and others and to be the presence of compassion in part of the world. St. Philip inspires me to pray always, serve well, love unconditionally and be a compassionate presence in this cold, harsh and dark world.

As we move through the month of November, let us celebrate the saints of the Church, the saints within our families and the holy souls who have passed from this life to the glory of God. We can celebrate the saints by reading their life stories, purposefully imitating their service to others, and praying to have the hope in faith that motivated the saints to grow in holiness. Lastly, we pray to have their willingness to prayerfully listen to the Lord and the courage to follow where the Lord leads. The saints are the "cloud of witnesses" who surround us in prayer, inspire us with their lives and support us in prayer. The Church gives us the saints to be our inspiration, our companions and our teachers. How blessed we are to have such great teachers!

For those of us who are actively discerning the call to consecrated/religious life, the



As you continue to discern the Lord's call upon your life, learn from the saints to be holy and to live joyfully for the Lord. As you discern, we Servite friars are praying for you. Stay well and be blessed.

Vocation Directors

Fr Donald Siple, OSM
donaldsiple@servitesusa.org

Mr Eddie Murphy
vocations@servitesusa.org

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