

**“How superstitious are they who scruple giving God solemn thanks for the lives and deaths of his saints!”**

**November 1, 1756, John Wesley**

**All Saints' Day Sonnet** by Malcolm Guite

On the feast of All Saints we celebrate the light of Christ reflected in the saints, living and departed who surround and inspire us even in our present darkness - MG

Though Satan breaks our dark glass into shards  
Each shard still shines with Christ's reflected light,  
It glances from the eyes, kindles the words  
Of all his unknown saints. The dark is bright  
With quiet lives and steady lights undimmed,  
The witness of the ones we shunned and shamed.  
Plain in our sight and far beyond our seeing  
He weaves them with us in the web of being  
They stand beside us even as we grieve,  
The lone and left behind whom no one claimed,  
Unnumbered multitudes, he lifts above  
The shadow of the gibbet and the grave,  
To triumph where all saints are known and named;  
The gathered glories of His wounded love.

**All Saints' Day Reflection** by Frederick Buechner

In his holy flirtation with the world, God occasionally drops a pocket handkerchief. These handkerchiefs are called saints.

Many people think of saints as plaster saints, men and women of such paralyzing virtue that they never thought a nasty thought or did an evil deed their whole lives long. As far as I know, real saints never even come close to characterizing themselves that way. On the contrary, no less a saint than Saint Paul wrote to Timothy, “I am foremost among sinners” ( 1 Timothy 1:15) ...

In other words, the feet of saints are as much of clay as everybody else's, and their sainthood consists less of what they have done than of what God has for some reason chosen to do through them. When you consider that Saint Mary Magdalene was possessed by seven devils, that Saint Augustine prayed, “Give me chastity and continence, but not now,” that Saint Francis started out as a high-living young dude in downtown Assisi, and that Saint Simeon Stylites spent years on top of a sixty-foot pillar, you figure that maybe there's nobody God can't use as a means of grace, including even ourselves.

The Holy Spirit has been called “the Lord, the giver of life” and, drawing their power from that source, saints are essentially life-givers. To be with them is to become more alive.

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## Study 48

### **Contemplation:**

What key words and ideas stand out to you? How do they help you take a deeper look at the communion of saints which we confess in the Apostles' Creed?

### **Practices:**

Write down one or two of the key phrases that are important to you. Hold them (literally) before God and wait silently on him. Record any further thoughts he may give you.

Take some time this week to consider how God is working in **your** life.

Try reading some excerpts (or a whole work) by one of the people God has used to speak through in the past, whether they have the title "Saint" or not. Be open to listening to the Holy Spirit as He continues to speak through them.

©sharonracke These contemplative studies are the result of the thoughtful and transformative teaching I have received both at The Dwelling Place ([dwellingplaceindy.org](http://dwellingplaceindy.org)), and as a student of The Renovare Institute ([renovare.org](http://renovare.org)). I pray that as you use them, you will experience the presence and love of God, and learn more about living with Christ daily. Sharon Racke ([recess.racke@gmail.com](mailto:recess.racke@gmail.com))