

## The Communion of Saints

*by Rita Allen, ocds*

It is always good for us to review some very basic tenets of our faith from time to time and one of the very beautiful doctrines of our faith contained in the Creed is the communion of saints.

Sometimes we forget when we are immersed in our own petty problems that we are not alone but are a part of a larger whole - the Mystical Body of Christ.

Yes, we of the Mystical Body of Christ are saints or potential saints. The three realms this embraces are the Church Triumphant including the Head of the Mystical Body, Christ himself and all the saints in heaven, the Church Militant, all the baptized souls on earth and the Church Suffering, the souls in Purgatory.

Our means of communication are our prayers and sufferings intended for each other. Perhaps our prayers can be called our cell phones. At any time of the day or night we can communicate with any one in all three realms. To contact most effectively we ask someone in Heaven to aid either a soul in Purgatory or on earth. Our sufferings also can be used to help ourselves or someone else.

This does not mean we change God's Will. No, God's Will is immutable, but He will often be open to changing an outcome, depending on our prayers. Supposing St. Monica, St. Augustine's mother did not offer up so many prayers for her son. Suppose she got tired of praying and gave up, St. Augustine would never be converted or perhaps converted only half-heartedly, and we would never have such a great saint in the Church with all the fruits of his conversion. Although God's Will is that we all become saints, He will often condition our conversion or sanctification on someone's prayers.

The one thing that is important to remember is that the Mystical Body of Christ is bound together by charity and it is prayer and offering of suffering that is the glue that unites us. It is Christ's love for His Bride the Church together with the outpourings of His Church that keeps us together as one body, one Church.

When we gather together to pray, we are sharing in the spiritual riches of each other. This is why it is important to pray together at times for "where two or more are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst". The spiritual goods of all in the group are shared in their prayer and Christ himself intercedes for us. The Communion of Spiritual Goods also includes the Sacraments and most especially the Eucharist which brings about union with God.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church in the chapter on the Communion of Saints also speaks of the Blessed Virgin as Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church. Her role in the formation of the Church is emphasized, for without her, the Mystical Body would be incomplete at the very least. For after the Ascension of her Son, she helped to build the Church and was instrumental in bringing the Holy Spirit to the Apostles and the young Church by her prayers.

It is in meditation on the Rosary that Our Lady leads us to reach contemplation of the Mystery of Christ and of the Mystical Body of the Church militant, suffering and triumphant. Jesus and Mary would have us enter increasingly more into the mystery of the communion of saints as we listen ever more closely to their teaching in the depth of our hearts and find there the desire for heaven, the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Thus it would give us a love of the cross and strength to carry it and from time to time a foretaste of heaven. Finally we would rest on the Heart of Him who is the way, the truth and the life and find fulfillment in our hope for eternity.

We cannot close without quoting St. Therese of Lisieux "Do not weep for I shall be more useful to you after my death and I shall help you then more effectively than during my life", and "I want to spend my heaven in doing good on earth".