

All Saints 2017

In his book *The Joy of Being Catholic*, author Mitch Finley says that when we say we belong to the communion of saints, all we mean is that we belong to a community that is much, much larger than the one we can see. And so today we honor the saints in heaven and the saints on earth, those people that have led lives such that they are sure to have gained heaven. We need to remind ourselves on this glorious day of those special people in our lives that have made or are making the right choices.

One of my favorite authors, Frederich Buechner, also says that it is not just the saints of the Church we should remember in our prayers on this day, but all the foolish ones and the wise ones, the shy ones and overbearing ones, the broken ones and whole ones, the despots and tosspots and crackpots of our lives who, one way or another, have been our particular fathers and mothers and saints, and whom we loved without knowing we loved them and by whom we were helped to whatever little we may have, or ever hope to have, of some kind of seedy sainthood of our own.

Groucho Marx once said that he wouldn't belong to any club that would have him as a member. Well, in the case of the communion of saints, I want to be a member of that club. In his novel *Black Cherry Blues*, crime fiction writer James Lee Burke, a Catholic, has his character Dave Robcheaux put it this way: "One of the advantages of being Catholic is that you belong to the western world's largest private club. Not all of its members are the best or most likeable people, but many of them are." And that's the key to what we celebrate today. We celebrate our desire for sainthood, our true desire to be kind and loving and forgiving Christian brothers and sisters. Fulfilling that goal will get all of us into the communion of saints.